THE BRITISH IN INDIA.

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THE BRITISH IN INDIA.

BY THE LATE

RIGHT HON. SIR WILLIAM MILBOURNE JAMES,

LORD JUSTICE OF APPEAL.

EDITED BY HIS DAUGHTER,

MARY J. SALIS SCHWABE.

London:

MACMILLAN AND CO.,

1882.

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PREFACE.

THE following work was written by my father between 1864 and 1869. He had for many years devoted much time and study to the history of the British rule in India, and to all matters connected with that country, and although he had no opportunity of personally visiting the land in which he took so deep an interest, his knowledge of the minutest details was so profound as to surprise many who had spent a lifetime there.

He was frequently struck by the fact that so little was generally known either of the past history or the present state of India, and the following work was commenced, partly to dispel that ignorance, and partly to put forward certain views, as to the best means of governing India and of rendering the people more prosperous, which he had formed during his studies and believed would prove efficacious remedies for the existing evils.

The work was originally intended to form two parts; the first being an account of the establishment of the British rule in India, closing with the suppression of the Mutiny; while the second was to describe the moral and material progress of the people of India under that rule, and was to give a complete, though concise, description of the advance of civilization and education, trade and agriculture, and to include some

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reflections on the means best calculated to develope the great resources of our Indian Empire.

This second part was unfortunately never completed. After 1869, in which year my father became a Vice-Chancellor, it was found that his health required complete rest during the vacations, and he was reluctantly obliged to postpone the completion of the work to a leisure which he was not destined to enjoy.

A considerable portion of the second part was written before 1869, and after that date my father wrote many essays on topics connected with India, such as the famines in Orissa and Bengal, the position of the English army, decentralization, and irrigation, which would have been embodied in the work. Many portions of the manuscript are, however, quite incomplete, the statistics are now somewhat out of date, and many circumstances have occurred during the last ten years, which have greatly modified views that formerly met with general acceptance. I have, therefore, reluctantly decided only to publish the historical part of the work, and although it will therefore in one sense be incomplete, I cannot but believe, that many will be interested in learning the view taken by an eminent lawyer of the romantic incidents and startling vicissitudes, which have chequered the existence of our Indian Empire.

M. J. Salis Schwabe.

January, 1882.

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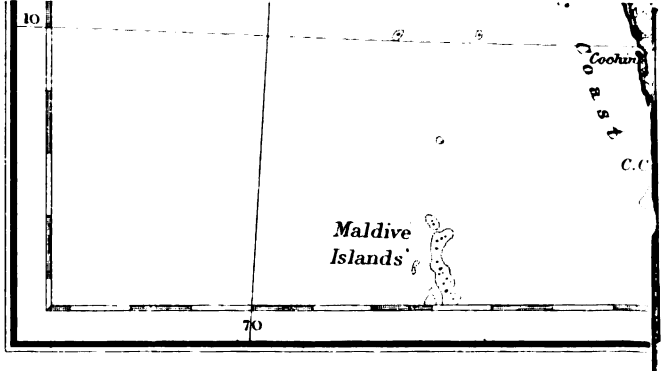

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BRITISH RULE IN INDIA.

INTRODUCTION.

The story of the growth of that great Empire which is under British rule in India—how the traders' factories grew into armed strongholds, how the lords of Fort William became the rulers of Bengal—and how the rulers of Bengal became the masters of all India—is a story of marvel as wonderful as many a wild oriental fable. It is a story which ought to be of enduring and never diminishing interest to all Englishmen; but not the least of the marvels connected with that wondrous story is the profound and dense ignorance which prevails with respect to it.

Some vague traditions exist of frauds, forgeries, and duplicities charged against Lord Clive. Many of the accusations against Warren Hastings are believed to be true. The names of Plassey, of Assaye, of Meeanee, Aliwal, and Sobraon are associated with some vague notions of great triumphs of British valour. People do know something of the horrors of the great Sepoy mutiny, of the massacre of Cawnpore, of the defence of Lucknow, and the siege and storming of Delhi; but

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the general knowledge of the reading multitude of England does not extend beyond this confused and fragmentary information.

This work is a humble attempt to remove, to some degree, that ignorance so strange and so discreditable.

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CHAPTER I.

1750—1754. Dupleix. Clive.

In the year 1750 there was in London a joint-stock company of merchants trading to the East Indies. Its entire capital was three millions two hundred thousand pounds, which represented loans made by it to the English Government in exchange for the extraordinary privileges of trading conferred upon it. Privileges at least which seem very extraordinary to us with our modern notions of political economy and freedom of trade. By royal charters confirmed by Acts of Parliament the East India Company had, as against all British subjects, the exclusive right of trading with the East Indies, comprehending under that designation the whole world eastward of the Cape of Good Hope and thence to the Straits of Magellan. All British traders within the limits assigned to the Company were declared liable to be seized and punished and their ships and ventures confiscated. Strange as it now seems that any nation should voluntarily submit to such a yoke, and establish such a despotism in the hands of a small and, according to our present ideas, insignificant body of commercial adventurers, it was not in those days singular. Similar bodies were established by the Dutch and by the French.

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Each nation seemed to think that it was thereby doing great things for its navigation and commercial greatness. Each looked with pride at the grandeur of its own company, and looked with feelings of envious hostility at the prosperity of the others, and English or French statesmen thought the destruction of a French or English factory on the Malabar or Coromandel coast a legitimate subject of national glorification.

In those days there also prevailed strange notions of international rights with respect to non-Christian states and lands. The English Government took upon itself to give to the East India Company the power of establishing forts and settlements, of maintaining armies, and of making war and peace with all states and people not Christians. It also assumed to erect the officers and servants of the Company at their settlements into English Corporations of Mayors and Aldermen, with all powers of civil and criminal justice and martial law over English and native within the limits of their trading settlements.

The Company had obtained from the Great Mogul grants conferring not only the right of trading, but very extensive exclusive privileges of trading.

At the time we are speaking of there were three principal English settlements in India; Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, with smaller factories or places of trade as dependencies thereon. The East India Company itself had as its income the profits of its trading monopoly. It annually transmitted to its factories in India and China, goods and bullion to the amount of something less on an average than a million sterling. These were disposed of doubtless at

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monopoly prices to the natives, and the net proceeds after paying all the expenses of the trading and of the establishments abroad were invested in return cargoes, which, sold at monopoly prices in England, produced on an average about two millions sterling, thus realizing for the Company a gross profit of one million sterling wherewith to defray all the cost of its home establishments and trading, and to pay the proprietors their dividends.

These were the whole modest resources of that Company which was so soon to become so famous and so powerful.

Its Indian establishments were humble enough. At each of the three principal settlements there was a chief agent or factor called Governor or President, assisted by persons called Members of Council, to which post of dignity the young lads who were sent out as clerks or writers rose through the gradations of junior merchants and senior merchants. They were essentially commercial agents, but the President and Council were from the exigencies of their position obliged to exercise judicial functions in their settlements, and to assume a political character in their dealings with the native authorities. How humble their nominal position was may be understood from this, that the actual assigned salary of a member of council was only 300*l.* a year. This was of course only nominal. While trading for their masters, the Company, they continued to trade also for their own profit, partly with the acquiescence of their masters, but still more by irregular private ways and means, the perquisites of office, which they did not think it necessary to disclose to their employers. That this was so

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was more than suspected, but as long as the returns from the East sufficed to pay the home expenses and to give a handsome dividend to the shareholders, the managing body in England were satisfied to connive at the proceedings of their Indian subordinates. These as they reached in due course the higher posts in the service found the means of realizing very handsome incomes from their trading speculations, and accumulated considerable fortunes, the reward of a long and disagreeable exile in the most unhealthy of climates, with which they returned to spend the evening of their days in their own country. For the first half of the eighteenth century the Company and their servants had proceeded in a continuous and somewhat monotonous career of commercial profit and prosperity. With this they were content.

No idea of territorial acquisitions beyond their own trading towns ever entered into their minds. It is true that they entertained in their service some trained bands of European and native soldiers, but only sufficient to defend their settlements from a hostile attack by some neighbouring Rajah or Nawab or to repel a predatory raid of Mahratta freebooters.

Nothing could well be more wretched than their military force. The European soldiers were obtained from the refuse of the English town populations by means, which are so graphically and accurately described by Sir Walter Scott in his novel of "The Surgeon's Daughter." Their officers were men of no note, without military training or education, without even the habits of a military life or professional feeling, paid according to the same wretchedly parsimonious scale as the civilians, and like them making up their

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incomes and accumulating wealth by participating in the profits of trade. They did not, any more than their fellow-servants of the counting-house, dream of power or cherish any thoughts of military ambition or hopes of military distinction.

It is scarcely necessary to observe that to George II. and his ministers, to the Parliament and nation of England, the thought of conquering territories from the Great Mogul would have seemed as wild as making a settlement in the moon. It is also to be recollected that in those days the only communication between England and the East was by means of slow sailing-ships going round the Cape, a voyage scarcely ever less than six months, and not unfrequently consuming the greater part of a year, so that by the time news of any transaction had reached England, and any comments upon it could arrive in India, it had already become old, forgotten in, or superseded by, new events. Nor was there any free press, nor much private correspondence, and it was only very slowly and very imperfectly, that anything came out to supply or correct any statements, which it suited the Company's officials in India to omit or falsify. It was therefore impossible for any authority in England to direct or control the conduct of affairs in the East, and public opinion was equally powerless.

It is important to bear in mind in reading the wondrous story of British India that there never was anything like a British conquest of India. No plan of such conquest was ever formed here, no armament ever left these shores for such purpose, nor did the British Exchequer ever furnish subsidy or supply

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with that object. And, further, no British Viking—no one like the Norman chiefs of the Middle Ages—ever left his native country to found a nation, or to acquire a principality in the East Indies. The Anglo-Indian empire is a thing by itself in the history of the world. How it came to exist, and how it grew, how the trading company and their officials became transformed into the most powerful oligarchy ever seen, is a story of much interest—a true story stranger than fiction.

The war between England and France had extended to the East, and their Indian settlements had become involved in the struggle, Madras had been taken by the French, and held by them until restored by the Treaty of Peace of 1748, and on the other hand an English attack on the French settlement of Pondicherry had signally, if not ignominiously, failed. A similarly disastrous result had attended the first efforts of the English to interfere with an armed force in favour of a pretender to one of the native principalities, Tanjore. Their little martial experience had not been encouraging to the English, and they had returned to their counting-houses, and to their proper, though inglorious pursuit of money-making for their masters, the Company, and for themselves, and there was peace between them and their French rivals. But in the raids and skirmishes two men had been brought to the fore—Dupleix and Clive—by whom everything was soon to be changed, and to whom, to Dupleix first, and then to Clive, the creation of the Anglo-Indian empire is due.

To Dupleix first; but for his gigantic schemes and towering ambition the English traders would probably

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have remained traders, and Clive would probably have remained at the desk to which he had returned after his first short essay in the petty warfare of the Carnatic. Dupleix appears to have been a man of great genius, capable of forming and carrying into execution vast designs; more brilliant, more grandiose in his plan than Clive, but without the personal courage, the reckless daring, and the soldier-like qualities of the latter.

The Deccan was at that time a great kingdom, which had been a few years previously founded by a soldier of fortune, the Nizam-al-Mulk. Nizam means lieutenant, and Nizam-al-Mulk was appointed the lieutenant of the Great Mogul over a large territory in South Central India about the year 1717. He soon converted his viceroyalty into an absolute sovereignty, and, being a man of energy and talent, he extended his sway or suzerainty more or less completely over the greater part of Southern India. Of the subordinate principalities the most considerable was that of the Nawab of the Carnatic. Shortly before the time of which we are speaking, that is to say, in the year 1748, the Nizam-al-Mulk, the founder of the kingdom and of the dynasty, died after a prosperous and glorious reign of thirty-one years, leaving his throne to his son. But there occurred thereupon that which, as we proceed in this history, we shall find to have been, and to be, the normal fate of all these Indian sovereignties. A successful soldier establishes a sovereignty which at his death is torn to pieces by family dissensions and intrigues of the Court and harem.

Nazir Jung was the son and successor of Nizam-

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al-Mulk, was in possession of his father's treasure and capital, and had apparently a legitimate and incontestable title to the succession. But upon some grounds which do not appear, or without ground, his right was contested by his nephew Murzapha Jung.

At that time the throne, if it may be so called, of the Carnatic was occupied by one Anwar-u-deen, who had succeeded in what may be considered as being then in India the normal course of things. A certain Doost Ali had made himself the Nawab of the Carnatic. He had, besides his sons, two sons-in-law, Mortaza Ali and Chunda Sahib. Chunda Sahib usurped part of his father-in-law's territory, and was in open rebellion, and in a fight between them Doost Ali was killed. His son, Sufder Ali, immediately assumed the Nawabship, and was at first so successful that he defeated Chunda Sahib, who was thrown into prison. Sufder Ali was himself shortly afterwards assassinated by some conspirators, at whose head was his brother-in-law Mortaza Ali. The conspirators did not, however, succeed in seizing the Nawabship, and the Nizam-al-Mulk, interposing as suzerain, had declared for the infant son of Sufder Ali, who was proclaimed and acknowledged, and placed under the guardianship of a regent. The regent was soon assassinated, and Anwar-u-deen made himself regent in his place. The infant prince himself was not allowed long to live, and the false regent, Anwar-u-deen, became Nawab.

The state of things thus existing, as well in the Carnatic as in the Deccan, not unnaturally suggested great schemes of aggrandizement to the able and

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ambitious Dupleix. There was a great opportunity of acquiring wealth, distinction, and power, by assuming the character of king-maker, and playing the part of commander, minister, and viceroy of the puppets to be placed on the thrones. Dupleix resolved not to lose this opportunity. His policy was to bring forward Chunda Sahib as a pretender to the Carnatic, and to support Murzapha Jung's claims to the Deccan. The English, of course, took the side opposed to the French, because it was so opposed, and in the first campaign the disciplined troops of the English and French were arrayed in support of the pretender whose cause they respectively espoused.

But on the treaty of peace, which was shortly afterwards made between France and England, the Madras English withdrew to their shops. Dupleix, after some vicissitudes, achieved complete success; Chunda Sahib, by his aid, became Nawab of the Carnatic, the whole being subdued to his power, except the stronghold of Trichinopoly, which alone held out. By the aid of Dupleix and Chunda Sahib, Murzapha Jung was established as Nizam of the Deccan. Dupleix acquired enormous treasures for himself, in addition to those which he reserved for his employers, the East India Company of France. He procured himself to be appointed commander of 7000 horse, and to be declared governor of the whole land, from the Krishna to Cape Comorin; that is to say, to be the real and absolute sovereign of the south of India, including the territory in which lay the British settlements. Nothing could well be lower than the fortunes of the English then seemed. While they were inactive their great rival had established a power and in-

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fluence such as no European had before dreamt of, and they were apparently at his mercy. They had a few scores of European soldiers, and a few hundreds of disciplined sepoys; while Dupleix had at his disposal all the forces of the Deccan and Carnatic, aided by no inconsiderable body of regular French troops, directed and disciplined by able French commanders and officers. They would probably have been glad to escape a struggle with such a foe—a struggle so unequal, and, according to all ordinary calculations, so desperate. They were driven, however, to action by Dupleix, who, ostentatiously drawing a circle of white flags around Madras, and through its suburbs, clearly intimated that the English, if permitted to remain at all, were so to remain cooped up within the limits of their town, and that all outside was the dominion and territory of the new French Nizam—for such in truth he was. They felt that further inaction was ruin, resolved to take part in the struggle, and accordingly sent assistance to Trichinopoly, where a stand was still made against the French and Chunda Sahib.

The Madras Council, moreover, inspired by young Clive, had spirit enough to accept with alacrity the challenge which had been so insolently given. Clive was made a captain, and placed at the head of the Anglo-British army, a force of 200 Europeans and 300 Sepoys, with eight officers, six of whom had never been in action, four of them indeed mere merchants' clerks who left their desks in this emergency.

Dupleix's forces were engaged in the siege of Trichinopoly. Clive conceived the design of divert-

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ing them from this siege by an attack upon Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic. He marched rapidly. The garrison, in a panic, abandoned city and citadel, in which Clive lost no time in fortifying himself. Here, against an enemy 10,000 strong, under Rajah Sahib, he stood a siege of several weeks' duration, in which he was reduced to such straits for want of food, that it is said that his Sepoys begged that the rice might be given to his Europeans, and that they would be content with the water in which it was boiled. It is certain, at all events, that the young captain inspired all the men of his small band with his own unflinching courage. At last help was at hand. Above the Deccan was a vast empire, occupied by the confederacy of the Mahrattas, Brahmin—or claiming to be Brahmin—princes, Hindoos between whom and the Mohammedan Court of the Nizam there was no love, and who, moreover, were quite as ready as Dupleix himself to intervene in the general *mêlée*, and see what could be got out of it. One of these, a chieftain named Morari Rao, had been subsidized, and had promised succour. He at last put his army in motion. The besiegers, aware of the approach of this force, endeavoured to anticipate its arrival by a general assault on Clive's entrenchment. It was a great Mohammedan festival, and the enemy's soldiers were stimulated by a liberal distribution of bang. But all their assaults were repelled by Clive, and with such heavy loss that they raised the siege that night, leaving 400 dead on the ground, with much of their ammunition and artillery. This was the turning-point in the campaign, and the turning-point in the history of British India. Clive lost no time in improving his

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opportunity. Joined by his Mahratta ally, and aided by some European reinforcements which had luckily in that very crisis arrived from Europe, he pursued, overtook, and entirely routed Rajah Sahib, although the latter had on his side been strongly reinforced by Europeans and Sepoys from Pondicherry. A rapid succession of brilliant feats of arms and of victories without a check, established the ascendency of the English in the Carnatic, and secured the Nawabship of that province to their ally and *protégé*, Mahommed Ali, the Nawab of the Carnatic whose name became so conspicuous in after-years in the History of India, and in the Parliamentary History of Great Britain.

Dupleix was not, however, disposed to accept the defeat. He was forming new plans, and making new efforts, not sparing a lavish expenditure, which swallowed up all the vast private fortune which he had accumulate . With his resources, his ability and energy, he must in all probability have succeeded; but, unhappily for him, his warlike policy and brilliant schemes had dried up the sources from which the French East India Company derived their dividends, and he was recalled in disgrace, and superseded by a Monsieur Godheu, who hastened to make terms with the Madras authorities, who were quite as anxious on their side for peace. No acquisitions of territory were obtained or sought by the latter; they were content to be restored to the quiet possession of their forts and trading towns, and to have their ally and *protégé* on the throne of Arcot, and were only too glad to be allowed in peace to resume their old pursuits, making fortunes for themselves,

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and not altogether omitting to make dividends for their masters the Company. The first was, however, their chief care and principal pursuit, and they had no other ambition. It was also made abundantly manifest in this war, that there was no government or prince in all the wide Deccan who had any firm hold in the country, or who either had or deserved the affections of the people. While there was no loyalty to sovereign to be shocked, neither was there any feeling of patriotism or nationality to be aroused by the audacious proceedings of a handful of foreign intruders. There was no legitimate king, there was no Commonwealth, no personal tie, no national bond, no country. It was in the ordinary and recognized course of things that whoever could pay for soldiers should draw to his standard as many as he could afford to entertain, and that the captain of the most powerful body of armed retainers should seize the supreme power. To the body of the people it was as much a matter of indifference who succeeded to the power, as the result of a law-suit between two adverse claimants is to the tenantry of an English estate. It is obvious what facilities for amassing wealth were afforded to the servants of the Company, by their position as protectors of an absolute Oriental despot, and they seem to have devoted themselves with single-minded energy and perseverance to making the most of such facilities, not allowing themselves to be disturbed by any dreams of territorial aggrandizement for their company or their country.

The splendid fabric of power, which Dupleix had raised, had been shattered to pieces, and thus apparently ended the first act of this great drama; but

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in the long and arduous struggle, which Dupleix had forced on the English, the latter had created an army and found a general who were soon to justify and to increase the reputation for skill, daring and courage, which they had acquired in the Carnatic.

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CHAPTER II.

1755—1765. Clive. Plassey. Acquisition of Bengal. Behar. Orissa.

WHILE Dupleix, after his recall to France, was wearing out his life and breaking his heart, seeking in vain some recognition of his claims and some compensation for his sacrifices from the French East India Company and the government of France, his younger and more fortunate opponent Clive was also, in his native country, enjoying his well-earned glory (not then tarnished) and recruiting his health and strength.

In November, 1755, he returned to India as lieutenant-colonel in the royal army, and as governor of Fort St. David in the Madras Presidency. The commission as lieutenant-colonel was probably considered as a high honour and reward, and as a full recognition of his services. He took with him three troops of Royal Artillery and 300 infantry, in those days a large force to be spared by Great Britain to India, and he also found at Bombay Admiral Watson, with a considerable squadron of British men-of-war, who had been stationed in the Eastern seas.

At that time there was no employment for Clive in the Deccan, as by the convention between the Governor

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of Pondicherry and the Governor of Madras the French and English Companies had bound themselves to abstain from any further interference in the quarrels of the native princes, and were wisely attending in peace to their own commercial affairs.

Clive and Watson, however, resolved not to be idle. There was on the West or Bombay coast of India a very formidable piratical people, who held about 120 miles of the coast with several strong fortresses, whence they issued on their marauding expeditions, sweeping the seas and plundering and burning towns and villages near the shore. With the sanction of the Bombay authorities Clive and Watson agreed to employ their forces against Angria, the pirate chief, and their efforts were crowned with success. The principal fortress, Gheriah, was, after a few days' show of resistance, surrendered, with Angria's treasure, by the terror-stricken garrison, and in a very short time all the remaining strongholds and vessels of the pirates were completely destroyed. They had long, for generations in fact, been the scourge and terror of all frequenting those seas or living near them. Their extirpation was an unmixed benefit to the human race, while the ease with which the dreaded Angria and his followers were subdued by the expedition, with a handful of men, contributed no little to the almost superstitious admiration and dread which were inspired by the military prowess of the British under Clive.

Clive, thus completely successful, entered upon his government of Fort St. David on the 20th of June, 1756; but he was not fated to remain long in the quiet occupation of that profitable post.

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On that very day, at the distance of 800 miles as the crow flies, was enacted the shocking tragedy of the Black Hole of Calcutta.

Calcutta was the principal settlement of the English on the Hoogly, one of the many mouths by which the waters of the great plain of the Ganges find their way into the Bay of Bengal. It was the property and territory of the English Company by the most legitimate of titles. A small tract of land on the river side had been granted to them by the great Mogul, then the legitimate and actual sovereign, as far back as the year 1698. There they made their settlement; there they created their original citadel of Fort William; there they established a port; traders resorted there, and under the auspices of the Company, on the Company's estate, under the protection of English law, administered by an English court, a large population of natives and foreign traders voluntarily established themselves as the subjects of the English; and Calcutta had thus grown into a great town, a mart and seaport of considerable importance.

In the year 1756 Siraj-ud-Doulah, a youth nineteen years old, succeeded his grandfather, Alivirdi Khan, in that which was nominally the viceroyalty under the Mogul, but from the decadence of the Delhi Empire was really the sovereignty of the great provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, a territory of upwards of 100,000 square miles of the richest, most fertile and most populous part of India, then peopled by fifteen or twenty millions of the most docile and least warlike population in the world; so unwarlike that it is said of them that they have never been known to produce a soldier, but consist entirely of

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industrious cultivators, skilful artificers and handicraftsmen, and astute traders.

With Alivirdi Khan, the grandfather and predecessor of the young Nawab, the authorities of Fort William had, during a long course of years, maintained the most amicable relations. Siraj-ud-Doulah, however, had conceived the strongest aversion for the English. He appears to have been a man of a cruel disposition, addicted to the lowest sensuality, and a drunkard, and to have been surrounded by favourites and courtiers of the worst description, without any able minister or honest adviser. It does not appear that the English had given him any cause of offence or any provocation, except that they were strengthening their fortifications in anticipation of hostilities then impending with the French. His first overt act of hostility against the English was to seize and subordinate a factory which they had at a place called Kazimbazar, near his capital, Moorshedabad. The governor and council of Fort William in vain tendered to him apologies the most humble, and offered to submit to any terms he might think fit to impose. Disregarding their offers and entreaties, Siraj-ud-Doulah appeared with a large and, what seemed to their abject terror, a formidable army before the gates of Calcutta. There was no Clive amongst them. The garrison of 200 Europeans and about 1000 natives, who had probably never seen a hostile shot fired, was certainly not a strong one; but had there been any one with the spirit and energy of a Clive to direct or inspire them, it is hardly to be doubted that they would have made effectual resistance. All, however, was panic, terror and confusion. The governor, the commander, and

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all who could find room in the boats fled in dismay, leaving Mr. Holwell and a few Europeans behind, who defended the fort for two days, and then surrendered on the evening of the 20th of June. The prisoners were 145 men and one Englishwoman; for it is to be noted in their favour that the fugitives had manhood enough in their terror to embark the women and children. It is not known how the solitary Englishwoman came to be left behind. All these prisoners were thrust into a dungeon, since known to history as the Black Hole of Calcutta, a room eighteen feet by fourteen, with two small air-holes or windows. The horrors of that night have been described by two of the surviving sufferers, Mr. Holwell and Mr. Cooke, and it is not necessary here to dwell on the heart-rending details of the sufferings under which, amidst the scoffs and jeers of their guards, 123 out of the 146 prisoners died in the course of that night. Twenty-three only, including the Englishwoman, were in the morning drawn out alive from the mass of corpses which had already begun to putrefy. Siraj-ud-Doulah gave Calcutta up to be plundered by his soldiers, and having written to the Mogul in boastful terms to announce the destruction and extirpation of the English, he returned in triumph to his capital.

But this outrageous wickedness was not long to go unavenged. A retribution as full as it was just was exacted, and the power which had been so abused was to pass into the hands of the English by a retaliation as righteous as any recorded in the history of the world. The English had been wantonly assailed, they had been cruelly dealt with; by every law, human and divine, the English were entitled to inflict the heaviest

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punishment on Siraj-ud-Doulah, and to protect themselves, their subjects, their wives and little ones for the future from any repetition of like capricious cruelty by any other native tyrant.

It was not until the 16th August, 1756, that the news first reached Madras of the sad events at Calcutta. It happened that just previously the old quarrel between the English and the French was beginning to break out afresh, and a considerable force had been gathered by the English with a view to military operations in the Deccan. Admiral Watson, with his squadron, was also at hand.

The Madras Government now showed themselves equal to the occasion. Clive was summoned from Fort St. David to take the command of an armament which was, with most creditable despatch, embarked on Watson's ships and on some trading-ships of the Company fitted up as transports. It consisted of 900 Europeans and 1500 Sepoys, and amongst the Europeans was a part of the 39th (then Aldercron's) regiment of infantry, which still bears on its colours *Primus in Indis*.

Clive arrived at the mouth of the Hoogly with the greater part of his forces (two ships having parted in a storm) on the 22nd of December, and found there the fugitives from Calcutta with a small force of soldiers which had been got together.

Clive lost no time in pushing on to Calcutta. He met on the way and defeated a considerable force of the enemy. On the 2nd of January, 1757, Calcutta was surrendered by the garrison, which had been placed there by Siraj-ud-Doulah, to Admiral Watson and Clive. They immediately sent on a detachment of 150

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Europeans and 200 Sepoys, with a light squadron of armed ships, to attack the town of Hoogly, which after a few hours' cannonading surrendered on the 11th of January.

Siraj-ud-Doulah now assembled an army of 40,000 men, and encamped with them close to the ditch of Calcutta, where Clive did not hesitate to attack him with an army consisting only of 650 European soldiers of the line, 100 artillerymen, 800 Sepoys, and 600 seamen lent from Watson's fleet. The immediate object of this attack was to take the Nawab's battering train. In this Clive failed through some mishaps—the troops mistaking their way in a fog—but he fought through the enemy's camp into Calcutta, doing considerable execution, but not without a severe loss to an army so small as his—not less than 100 Sepoys, 120 Europeans, and two cannon.

The exploit, although it failed to achieve the particular result which (as we now know from Clive's account) was aimed at, succeeded in effectually terrifying the Nawab. Siraj-ud-Doulah offered terms, which Clive felt himself constrained to accept, and an agreement for peace was accordingly made, both sides being aware how hollow it was. Clive's great reluctance to come to any terms at all was overcome, as he says, by the consideration that the news of war between the French and English Governments had reached India; that Mons. Bussy, the French commander in the south, had already begun to move; and that there was close at hand at Chandernagore, in Bengal itself, a large French force which might at any time, under orders from Pondicherry, lend overwhelming aid to the native army of Siraj-ud-Doulah. The English authorities actually

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assented, notwithstanding Admiral Watson's opposition, to an additional article for an alliance defensive and offensive with the Nawab. The prudence of this arrangement, whatever may be thought of its dignity, was soon demonstrated. Siraj-ud-Doulah having drawn off his army in pursuance of the treaty, Clive and Watson felt themselves free to act promptly with a view to securing themselves against all danger from the French on that side. Accordingly they resolved to reduce Chandernagore, which lies on the Hoogly some twenty miles above Fort William.

The Nawab was applied to for permission, as the town was in his territory, and, after some vacillation, gave an answer, or was reported to have given an answer, which the English construed into an assent which they would not allow him to retract, and, without further ceremony or delay they invested the place by land and by water. After ten days' stout resistance the place fell, and almost the whole French force in the north of India became prisoners of war.

It is impossible to overrate the importance of this success. It relieved the English for ever from the most dangerous enemy they could have had in that part of India, and it was immediately followed by the most important results.

Siraj-ud-Doulah, irritated and alarmed by this fresh display of the daring and power of the British, resumed a hostile attitude and entered upon negotiations with the French in the Deccan for an alliance against them. Clive contrived to be well informed of all his intrigues and schemes, and had copies of his letters to Mons. Bussy. The Nawab's conduct indeed was that of a madman or drunkard. "One day," so writes Clive

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at the time, "he tears my letters and turns out our Vakeel and orders his army to march, the next countermands it, sends for the Vakeel and begs his pardon for what he has done. Twice a week he threatens to impale Mr. Watts, the English resident."

It was obvious that no reliance could be placed for an hour on such a man, and that the English had everything to fear from him. He had also become intolerable to his own officers, and to the rich native bankers, whose lives and fortunes were not worth a day's purchase under his rule. It was therefore a matter of course that a conspiracy should be formed amongst his own people to get rid of him. The principal agent in this conspiracy appears to have been Omichund, one of the most influential and wealthy of the Hindoo capitalists. Meer Jaffier, the Nawab's commander-in-chief, was also drawn into the plot and was selected as the future sovereign. The English Council and Clive were made aware of the designs of the conspirators and at once, as they lawfully and rightfully might, entered into them. It was arranged that the English forces should advance against the native army, and that Meer Jaffier, withdrawing from his prince, should join them with the large body of troops under his immediate command.

Clive acted with his usual promptitude and decision and took the field with an army of 3000 men, of whom one-third were Europeans. The Nawab advanced to meet him. Against the small force of Clive were arrayed forces estimated, with some exaggeration probably, at from 35,000 to 40,000 infantry with 15,000 cavalry. These were supported by fifty pieces of heavy cannon, each drawn by forty or fifty yoke of

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oxen, and pushed forward by an elephant from behind. The whole of the English artillery was eight six-pounders and a howitzer. The hostile armies were within one day's march and Meer Jaffier had failed to keep his engagement with the English. For a few hours —a few hours only—the resolution of Clive wavered, and he was one of a majority in a council of war which voted to avoid battle, and to wait until they were joined by some of the promised troops.

After further solitary deliberation, however, Clive was himself again, and determined to play out the game boldly. He gave orders to cross the river Hoogly which lay between him and the enemy. This was done on the 22nd of June, 1757, and after a toilsome march of fifteen miles, the whole of Clive's little army was bivouacked in the early morning of the 23rd within a mile of the enemy's encampment. With the dawn of day the vast hosts of the enemy came forth, and the battle began with a noisy cannonade, which lasted for several hours. The ill-served and cumbrous artillery of the enemy, however, did no mischief to the English, whose thin lines, skilfully sheltered, presented little mark to the clumsy artillerymen on the other side, while every shot from Clive's guns told with great effect on the dense masses of the natives. Towards the middle of the day some portions of the enemy's army showed symptoms of wavering. The happy accident of a heavy shower of rain soon afterwards destroyed most of their ammunition and rendered their guns useless. This dispirited them more, and added to the alarm of Siraj-ud-Doulah, who was, not without cause, afraid that the ranks closest to his person were filled with traitors and conspirators; while Meer

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Jaffier stood ominously aloof. Under the influence of his fear, perhaps through advice perfidiously given, Siraj-ud-Doulah gave orders to retreat from the field. The movement was of course seen by his watchful foes, and an immediate and general advance of the British line converted the retreat into a panic rout so complete that the entire army dispersed, and their camp, with all their artillery and baggage, and an enormous booty, fell into the hands of the conquerors. There had been little fighting on the day. Until the decisive movement, Clive's army had been kept well sheltered in a wood and behind fences, and to that movement, when made, no real resistance was offered except by a small body of French soldiers, sixty in number, who behaved with great courage. So that the decisive victory of Plassey was won by Clive with a loss of twenty-two killed and fifty wounded. It was like Agincourt in that respect, but unlike it in another. The enemy did not stay to be killed, and left 500 dead only on the field of battle.[1]

Meer Jaffier, during the fight, had moved his corps away from the Nawab's, and after the victory, like Lord Stanley at the field of Bosworth, came in with his congratulations to the conqueror, who did not think it prudent to quarrel with him for his dilatoriness.

[1] In the accounts of this battle, as of many other of the great Indian battles, it is impossible not to suspect much exaggeration in the estimates formed by the victors of the numbers opposed to them. They probably relied on the guesses of natives, not likely to be accurate even if truthful, which they never were. The numbers on their own side the English had of course accurately counted, and it is therefore certain that the grand victory of Plassey was won by a force of 1000 Europeans and 2000 natives and eight small guns, with a few insignificant casualties.

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Meer Jaffier was sent on in advance to Moorshedabad, the capital, followed by Clive at the head of an advanced guard of 500 men. There was no further resistance, and Meer Jaffier was forthwith installed as Nawab. He was led by Clive himself to the Musnud, thus unequivocally proclaiming to all that he was Nawab by the favour and under the protection of the British.

Siraj-ud-Doulah had fled in disgrace, and sought to conceal himself; but, soon betrayed, he was brought back in chains to his capital and put to death in his prison by the orders, it is said, of a son of Meer Jaffier, who himself protested to the English that the deed was done unsanctioned by him.

The official treaty which was forthwith concluded between Clive and Meer Jaffier was moderate enough. A million sterling was to be paid to the Company as a compensation for their loss at Calcutta and to reimburse them the expenses of the campaign; 500,000*l.* more was to be paid to the English, and 270,000*l.* to the Native and the Armenian merchants for their losses at the sacking of Calcutta. The Company were confirmed in their possessions and privileges. The territory within the Mahratta Ditch around Calcutta and to the extent of 600 yards beyond was vested absolutely in them, and a zemindary or lordship, afterwards known as Clive's Jaghire, now known as the twenty-four Parganas, was granted to them as zemindars, they paying the customary rents paid by the former zemindars to the Government. The French were to be for ever forbidden to settle in the provinces, and their factories and effects given to the English. No forts were ever to be erected on the river

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below Hoogly; and there was to be a perpetual alliance, offensive and defensive, between the Nawab and the Company.

It is usual to date the commencement of the Anglo-Indian Empire from the battle of Plassey. But in truth, whatever political influence the Company acquired from that great victory, their servants in the East had at that time no idea of assuming actual sovereign power for them. The grant of the zemindary was no more than had been granted to many great nobles and chiefs by the Indian princes, and was in substance little more than the grant of the County of Middlesex to the Corporation of London, or of the Duchy of Cornwall to the Black Prince. It was in fact a county.

Besides, however, the avowed terms contained in the public treaty made on behalf of the Company, there was a secret treaty made for the personal benefit of the chiefs in the conspiracy against the deposed Nawab, and providing gifts for the army and navy who had taken part in the campaign. These were not short of another million and a half. Clive himself had received at once a present of 160,000*l*, from the grateful Nawab.

An incident occurred with respect to the division of these private spoils which must not be omitted, as it is constantly referred to as a stain on the English name and as tainting their Eastern acquisitions at the outset with the stigma of a degrading fraud.

Omichund, the Hindoo banker, just as the plot was ripening, threatened to betray his accomplices unless he was assured by a stipulation in the treaty that he was to receive 300,000*l*. for his services. Everything was at stake, and Clive and the members of the

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Calcutta Council were constrained to promise him his price, but with a determination to break the promise and to requite treachery with perfidy. With that resolve they had of course no difficulty in putting their names to a false treaty which was shown to Omichund with the required stipulation duly inserted. But as Admiral Watson refused to sign the deceptive document, Clive had no hesitation in forging the Admiral's name to it. Omichund was satisfied, and the plot went on and succeeded as we have seen.

It is impossible to clear the fame of Clive and his associates from the stain of a fraud so coarse and so dishonouring, although he himself could never be brought to see or at least to acknowledge that he had done anything else than defeat the villainy of Omichund by an allowable artifice, not only excusable but justifiable under the circumstances.

It is obvious, however, that neither the English Government or nation, nor indeed the East India Company were in any way responsible for or affected by the discredit of the transaction. It was a matter exclusively between the conspirators, a personal and private fraud by which the associates of Omichund appropriated to themselves the share of the illicit spoils out of which they had cheated him. There was not even the excuse or pretence that it was done for any public good, and it was not until long afterwards that the disgraceful story was told to the British people.

Clive remained in Calcutta consolidating the power of Meer Jaffier, who obtained the firman from Delhi which was still considered a form essential to legitimate his title as Nawab. Clive pacified and reconciled the Nawab's disaffected subjects, some by the show of

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his arms, some by timely mediation, and by wise and moderate counsels did all that could be done to give security to Meer Jaffier's power, and good government to his country. With a small army Clive marched to Meer Jaffier's assistance, when attacked soon after his accession by a powerful force from Oude under a son of the Great Mogul himself; by his presence he confirmed the hesitating and wavering dependents of the new Nawab in their fidelity, and by the even tenor of his advance dissipated the hostile force. Nothing in the East had ever excelled, or perhaps equalled, the prestige of Clive's name or his popularity, and few had so rapidly acquired colossal wealth. The Great Mogul himself hastened to bestow upon him his highest titles of honour; while Meer Jaffier showed his gratitude in a more substantial form by bestowing on him the Jaghire or feudal superiority over the Company's zemindary with the reserved rent, which was not less than 35,000*l.* a year, so that he was in the singular position of being the feudal superior of his own masters, the Company. While these events were in progress in Bengal the affairs of the English in the south, in the absence of Clive, again became in a very unpromising condition. The French still had a power and influence in the Deccan of the same kind as, and probably not less than, that which Clive had succeeded in establishing in Bengal, and their proceedings in the Carnatic became so active and so alarming as to fill with not unreasonable terror the authorities at Madras. It required all the resolution and self-will of Clive, to resist the earnest and imploring entreaties of the Madras council for the return to them in their present strait of the forces, which they had lent to save their Calcutta brethren.

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The French subdued province after province, took factory after factory, razed Fort St. David, and again reduced the English to the possession of the town of Madras—indeed of Fort St. George alone—where they were closely besieged by an army of 3000 Europeans and 4000 well-disciplined and well-officered Sepoys. The Madras English, however, having concentrated nearly all their forces, had about 4000, of whom 1800 were Europeans, under an able commander, Major Laurence, for the defence of the place. The French commander, moreover, had, luckily for them, given great and unpardonable offence to the population of the surrounding country by pressing men of all castes, high and low, as common labourers, and they fled on all sides from him as from a pestilence, so that he was absolutely dependent for all his supplies on the French fleet. An English fleet and armament were also expected soon to arrive to meet those which the French Government had sent out. Under these circumstances Clive thought it best not to go himself or send away his army for the succour of Madras, while so much yet remained to be done for the consolidation of the English power and influence in Bengal; but he did make an effective diversion by detaching a very considerable portion of his force under one of his ablest officers, Colonel Forde, to attack a Division of the French who had possessed themselves of the "Northern Circars," that long narrow tract which lies between the central table-land of India and the sea, and between the 16th and 20th degrees of latitude, and comprehends the several territories or districts of Ganjam, Vizagapatam, Rajmahendri and Masulipatam.

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Colonel Forde was energetic and successful in his proceedings. He attacked and defeated in the open field the French general, Mons. Conflans, who threw himself into Masulipatam, where he was besieged by Forde. Conflans' force was actually superior in numbers to Forde's. Salabat Jung, whom the French had made the Nizam of the Deccan, was with his army only a few miles off, and reinforcements of disciplined troops were on their way from Pondicherry. Forde, thus threatened, acted with a decision worthy of Clive himself; he assaulted the town at midnight, forced his way in and compelled the whole French force, upwards of 3000 men, to surrender themselves prisoners of war. The defeat was decisive, and had its usual effect on the counsels of the native prince, who lost no time in treating with the victors and deserting the French, whom he engaged to expel for ever from the Deccan. Masulipatam, with some districts around it (as large as Devonshire), became the territory of the Company.

The siege of Madras by the French which commenced in December, 1758, was continued until the 16th of February, 1759, when Admiral Pocock appeared off Madras with his squadron and some reinforcements of troops. The French commander found himself sternly constrained precipitately to abandon the siege, leaving behind his sick and wounded, and much artillery and ammunition. Until towards the end of that year nothing further occurred to change materially the position of the English in Madras.

On the 27th of October, 1759, Coote, one of Clive's best officers at the battle of Plassey (one of the minority in the council of war who voted to fight,

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and whose opinions were ultimately adopted), landed at Madras, bringing with him a royal regiment of infantry and strong reinforcements of the Company's European soldiers. He immediately began active operations, and the French commander, Lally, on his side, was not slow to take the field against him.

On the 22nd of January, 1760, the hostile forces came into collision, and there was fought the great battle of Wandewash, great in its results. The fighting was confined almost entirely to the Europeans, who were about 2000 a side, and resulted in a complete and decisive victory to the English. After this victory the English prosecuted the war with unremitting vigour and uninterrupted success, until at length, in December, 1760, it was the fate of the French in this singular game of 'Beggar my Neighbour,' to be reduced in their turn to the sole possession of Pondicherry, where, shut up with all his forces, Lally was closely beleagured by the British, and on the 16th of January, 1761, having only two days' provisions in the place, was compelled to yield himself and all his remaining army prisoners of war. The fortifications of Pondicherry were razed to the ground, and the English, now completely rid of their dangerous rivals, succeeded to all, and more than all, the power and influence which the latter had for so many years exercised throughout Southern India.

Meanwhile another formidable European rival had been effectually disposed of by Clive. The Dutch had a small factory on the Hoogly, above Fort William, called Chinsura, and they appeared in the river with several ships of war and a force of not less than seven or eight hundred European soldiers, with as many

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Asiatics and a train of artillery, a force which the previous narrative shows to have been of very serious magnitude.

Clive was not the person to allow such a force of European rivals, who might become foes, to settle on his river. He obtained from his friend Meer Jaffier positive orders to the Dutch armament to leave his territory, and as they evinced no disposition to comply with the Nawab's requisition, Clive took upon himself the responsibility of compelling them to do so by force. His own forces, small at best, were at the time much reduced, but nevertheless with his usual audacity he did not hesitate to attack the Dutch by sea and by land, and obtained a complete triumph over them. This high-handed proceeding of Clive had its usual success. The Dutch submitted, and on their submission and petition their trading-factory was graciously permitted to remain at Chinsura, and they were but too glad to obtain pardon by the most ample apologies and by payment of all the expenses of this little campaign.

Thus ended the first decade of the military career of the East India Company. The contests, which had resulted so gloriously and so favourably for them, had neither been commenced nor provoked by them. In the south the French had undoubtedly been the aggressors throughout, and they had on more than one occasion, as we have seen, brought the English settlements to the verge of destruction, and the English had done no more than resist with spirit their attacks. When the tide of success turned, the Madras authorities, in their public character on behalf of the Company, did not abuse the legitimate rights

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which the laws of war gave them over the native princes, and in claiming and obtaining only the territory of Masulipatam for themselves they were certainly content with a very moderate share of the spoils of war. In the north, Siraj-ud-Daulah had well merited his fate, and there too the acquisition of six hundred yards around Calcutta, and of the zemindary rights over the twenty-four Parganas did not indicate any great avidity for territorial aggrandizement. Their expedition against the pirates was a service to humanity. In their attack on the Dutch they were merely acting in self-preservation, and protecting themselves from a peril great and imminent. The war on their side was throughout a just war, and in their conduct of it and in the results which they obtained from it, it is impossible to allege with truth that they had violated any principle of international right, or abused their position as victors. Never was territory gained or power acquired more legitimately, than the possessions of which the East India Company had thus become the lords. The paramount influence which they had acquired over the princes and people of Bengal, the Carnatic, and the Deccan was the necessary result of the arduous and perilous struggle, a struggle for life or death, into which they had been reluctantly dragged.

The next years were the darkest in the history of the British rule in India. Clive had left Bengal in February, 1760. Those who succeeded to the management of the Company's affairs in Bengal had apparently neither the wish nor the ability, to exercise their power with any regard for the honour of their own country, or the good of the native population. To make

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money for themselves as rapidly as possible was their only concern. Their cupidity was inflamed by the recollections of the vast bribes which Clive and his associates had derived from the lucrative business of king-making. They took up the same trade in a coarser way; and soon found occasion for quarrel with Meer Jaffier; and on the allegation that he had not fulfilled all his engagements, that he was misgoverning the country, and that his misgovernment was producing universal discontent and disaffection in his subjects and mutiny in his army, they proceeded to depose him and to sell his throne to one Cassim Ali, the son-in-law of Meer Jaffier, in consideration of a sum of 200,000*l.*, agreed to be divided between eight members of the council, and of the surrender of the provinces of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong to the Company. There was (it must be recorded) a minority in the council, who refused to concur in this unworthy transaction, or to accept any portion of the bribes. The English, even under these men, displayed their usual military energy in support of the new prince, and after a battle with the Mogul emperor himself, obtained from him the formal institution of Cassim Ali as Soubahdar of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, under an annual tribute of 240,000*l.* a year.

The alliance between Cassim Ali and his friends in the Calcutta council did not, however, last long. Their quarrel arose out of the intolerable abuses of the private trading in which the English from the highest to the lowest participated. They not only claimed the right of exemption from all the customs and dues which were levied from his own subjects, but resented as a wrong that he sought to relieve the latter by

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extending the same exemption to them. They claimed monopolies of all kinds, and they compelled the natives to sell to them on their own terms. Their lowest servants and agents did the same, and the exactions, frauds, and insolent injustice of the English and their native agents were intolerable. The wealth of the country was devoured by them as by a swarm of locusts, but their insulting arrogance was perhaps still more difficult to be borne.

The quarrel was not long in coming to a head. Cassim Ali does not appear to have been a man disposed to submit patiently; he took strong steps to enforce his authority, and the council took violent ones in support of the private pecuniary interests of the members, which were involved in the continuance of the iniquitous system which they had established. The English seized Cassim Ali's citadel at Patna, but were unable for the moment to hold it. Then Cassim Ali did that which has more than once occurred in the outbreaks of the natives in India. It would seem as if an oriental, when thoroughly angered and throwing himself with desperate earnestness into a quarrel, cannot resist a maniacal thirst for blood; a long pent-up hatred kept down by fear or prudence at last bursts through all restraint, and shows itself in some insane act of startling atrocity. So it was with Cassim Ali. He retook the citadel, and made prisoners of 150 British subjects, but unable to resist the English, who with 900 Europeans and 1200 Sepoys had rapidly reduced his dominions, and were approaching his capital, he prepared for flight into the neighbouring province of Oude. Before leaving he gave orders for the slaughter of his prisoners;

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and with one exception, (a surgeon named Fullerton, who for some cause was allowed to escape,) they were all massacred, the actual perpetrator of the massacre being the renegade Sumroo or Sombre. This is known as the massacre of Patna. After this wanton act, so useless that it seems to have been done out of an insanely ferocious bravado, Cassim Ali took refuge in Oude, and the "gentlemen" of the English council proclaimed the restoration of Meer Jaffier; not without stipulations for fresh *douceurs* and for confirmation and extension of all their trading privileges and exactions.

The then ruler of Oude was Sujah-ud-Doulah, a powerful prince; and it so happened that the Great Mogul himself, the titular sovereign-paramount of all India, having been driven out of his capital by a Mahratta force, had also at this time taken refuge in Oude. The Nawab of Oude was named by him Vizier, and with this title, and having the person of the Shah in his possession, he really wielded whatever power and influence still remained attached to the imperial dignity; nor were these small, for the firman of the Great Mogul was still desired by the princes, and regarded by the nobles and people of India, as the sole legitimate title. Sujah-ud-Doulah, accompanied by the Shah, and by Cassim Ali, took the field at the head of an army said to be 50,000 strong, supported by a numerous artillery, the best appointed and most formidable native army which the English had as yet to encounter; and against this host Major Munro, the English commander, was only able to muster 1200 Europeans and 8000 Sepoys. In the ranks of the latter was such insubordination that Munro was obliged to prevent an open mutiny by the strongest measures.

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Twenty-four native soldiers, selected as the worst of the ringleaders, were blown from the mouth of cannon.

By this stern measure the attempted mutiny was effectually repressed. Munro pursued his march. The two armies met at Buxar, and Munro obtained a complete victory, the enemy leaving on the field 4000 dead and 130 pieces of cannon. Nor were these the principal trophies of the great fight; for the next day Shah Alam, with his followers, left his associates, glad apparently to escape from what was after all but an honourable confinement under his nominal Vizier, but real master, and voluntarily placed himself in the hands of the English.

While the military affairs of the Company seemed thus uniformly prospering in the east, and their servants were making rapid fortunes at the expense of the princes and people of India, whom they plundered and oppressed, the affairs of the Company at home were in a state of complete disorder, and they were almost on the verge of ruin. In fact their officials in India were too much engrossed with their own interests to pay much attention to those of their masters, and every one, high and low, civil and military, did that which seemed good in his own eyes. There was scarcely less disorder and confusion in the councils of the Company at home, which was torn by factions whose disputes were embittered by the interposition of the political parties which were contending for power in the British Parliament; but as every ship from India brought news worse than its predecessor of the rampant misrule and unbridled licence which prevailed in Bengal, and the pecuniary prospects of the Company were getting

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darker and darker, the shareholders were roused to take active steps to right their affairs. Clive, now Lord Clive, was in 1764 sent out as governor and as the head of a committee to whom the amplest powers were given. Instructions at the same time were given in the most positive terms forbidding every servant of the Company from accepting any present from any native prince, and the court of directors sent out letters[2] in equally strong terms denouncing and forbidding the private trade which had led to such abuses.

Clive, after a tedious voyage of eleven months, arrived at Calcutta, in May, 1765, and found matters even worse than the worst accounts which had reached England before he left.

Meer Jaffier had just died, and in defiance of the positive order of the court of directors, the Calcutta council had hastened to sell his place to his illegitimate son Nazim-ud-Doulah, for a sum of 140,000*l.* Mahomed Riza Khan, the chief minister of the Nawab, had spent upwards of 200,000*l.* in bribes amongst the principal members of the council; and as a specimen of what was done elsewhere, the following extract from a despatch of the court of directors will suffice:—

"In the province of Burdwan, the resident and his council took an annual stipend of near 80,000 Rupees per annum from the Rajah, in addition to the Company's salary. . . . We apprehend it went further,

[2] Their letter of the 19th of February, 1766, deserves to be recorded, both for their own credit and as containing a very clear summary of the misconduct of their servants in direct violation of their repeated injunctions. (Gleig's "Life of Lord Clive," p. 183.)

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and that they carried this pernicious principle even to the sharing with the Rajah of all he collected beyond the stipulated malguzary or land revenue, overlooking the point of duty to the Company, to whom properly everything belonged that was not necessary for the Rajah's support."

It is impossible to speak in terms too high of the vigour, wisdom, and disinterestedness of this second administration of Lord Clive. In a very short space of time he dismissed from the service all the principal participators in the peculations and dishonourable practices which he unsparingly investigated and exposed, that is to say, most of the chief civil servants in Bengal; and he called to his assistance in their place experienced officers from other presidencies. He required from all the execution of a stringent covenant not to exact or receive under any pretence from any native a bribe or present. He put an end to the whole system of private trading, with all its oppressions and abuses, establishing in its place in favour of the Company a regulated monopoly which has continued to this day in the one article of salt, out of the profits of which he assigned certain shares to the officials. This being the only mode he could devise of giving them that adequate remuneration, which was essential to relieve them from the necessity and the temptation to follow the example of their predecessors, in eking out their absurdly insufficient official salaries by indirect and illicit means.

He had also during this administration to deal with a strong hand with the military, who had revelled in the enjoyment of largesses made to them by Meer Jaffier and his successors under the name of Double

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Batta, the discontinuance of which had been peremptorily ordered by the home authorities.

A trades' union strike ensued on Clive's performance of the duty imposed on him. The English officers with hardly an exception entered into covenants to stand by one another, and raised a fund to which the disaffected in the Civil Service also largely contributed. It was agreed that they should all resign on a given day unless their demand for the recall of the obnoxious measure was complied with, and they came under a pledge to defend with their lives the lives of any of the body who might be condemned by court-martial for their mutiny. Although Clive was at that time threatened by a powerful army of the most formidable warriors in India—the Mahrattas—his spirit did not quail. His unequalled prestige and his unbounded personal popularity with the Sepoys stood him in good stead in this emergency, and when the army learnt that a munificent legacy of 70,000*l.* bequeathed to Lord Clive by Meer Jaffier's will had been every shilling of it dedicated by him to form a fund for officers' widows and orphans, there was a strong revulsion of feeling in his favour. Many of the officers, the younger ones, who had been misled by their seniors, repented and were pardoned. Nothing is more touching in the interesting narrative of the details of this great work of Clive's than the considerate kindness of his conduct to all to whom kindness could be shown, contrasted with his stern severity towards the chiefs and leaders of the conspiracy. These he brought to court-martial and cashiered the service, abstaining from the severest penalties of military law only in deference to the

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doubts of his Council, whether under the then state of the law the punishment of death could be lawfully inflicted in the Indian army for mutiny. Nothing could be more complete than Lord Clive's triumph; the mutinous spirit was effectually subdued, and his reform of the army was as great as his cleansing out of the foul styes of corruption in which the civil servants had been wallowing.

In order to bring together these great works of reform in the two great branches of the service, we have rather anticipated the course of time, and we must now go back for a twelvemonth to take up the narrative of his transactions with the native princes—transactions most momentous in their results to India. No sooner had Clive reduced to order the chaos which he had found in the Calcutta Council, than he proceeded to the scene of war. On his way he had an interview with the young Nawab of Bengal, who had been set up by the Council, and arranged with him to relieve him of all the cares and responsibilities of a government for which he was wholly unfit, assigning him out of the revenues of the provinces a princely income, with which he was well content, although charged with ample allowances for the dignified maintenance of the other members of the family of the late Nawab Meer Jaffier. "Thank God," was the young Nawab's exclamation when the arrangement was concluded, "I shall now have as many dancing-girls as I please."

Clive's name alone was sufficient to bring the Oude Vizier to sue for peace. Sujah-ud-Doulah at once repaired to the English camp, ready to submit to any terms Clive might impose. But in one respect

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he showed himself superior to most other Indian princes in like straits. He did not think it necessary to purchase favour by betraying into the conqueror's hands his allies, Cassim Ali and Sumroo, who were allowed to escape and seek refuge in parts of India beyond the English power.

Lord Clive met the Oude Vizier at Benares, and proceeded to have an interview with the Mogul at Allahabad. His terms were so moderate that he had little difficulty in coming to an arrangement with both potentates.

The Vizier was, as the ally of the English, to retain his dignity and his dominions, paying a sum for the expenses of the war of 600,000*l.*, which was certainly not exorbitant; but he was required by them to give up or restore to the Mogul's actual possession, and as his immediate domain, the rich provinces of Allahabad and Corah. Lord Clive engaged to pay the Mogul also 260,000*l.* a year out of the revenues of the Bengal provinces, and in return for the services rendered to the emperor, presented his "humble petitions and requests" to that monarch, who was pleased to grant the same—all proper respect and homage, in outward form at least, being paid to him who was still acknowledged as the lawful sovereign paramount of all India. The grants which Clive obtained in answer to such his humble petition were comprised in several firmans, all dated the 12th day of August, 1765, granting to the Company for ever the dewannee of the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa; confirming to them Burdwan and their other possessions in Bengal; ratifying also all the grants which they had obtained from the Nawab of the Carnatic, and further

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granting to them the Northern Circars, which Colonel Forde had wrested from the French. The latter grant, however, was not considered as completed until the 12th of November, 1766, when the Nizam also on his part formally ceded all his rights in them to the Company.

Thus, on the 12th day of August, 1765—only nine years from the tragedy of the Black Hole—the East India Company entered into legal possession, under a title by Indian public law indisputable and indefeasible, of a territory larger than France. With a rapidity of growth not without many examples in the East, the modest and timid settlement on the Hoogly had become a great town; the small garrison of the town an army; the masters of the town lords and zemindars of the Parganas and Burdwan; and the lordship had swelled into the great kingdom of Bengal.

This new Eastern power, however, unlike any of its predecessors, was permanently fixed. It had taken firm root; it might increase, but could not diminish. Whatever other weaknesses or vices the government of such a corporation might exhibit, it had no favourite; it had no musnud to be seized by some impatient heir or ambitious general; it could not squander its treasures or waste the substance of its subjects in riotous living, amidst buffoons and dancing-girls; nor was it mortal, to leave its empire to be torn to pieces by contending usurpers. This sovereign corporation had moreover this special advantage over all the other sovereigns and princes of India,—that behind it was the power of the British Empire, to assist it in any great emer-

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gency, to rescue it from any great peril, to restore it after any great disaster.

It is moreover to be observed that the Company, in obtaining from the Mogul the grants of the government and revenues of the extensive provinces included in their dewannee, did not displace any person who had any better title or more legitimate pretensions than their own. The recent Nawabs of Bengal were mere creatures of the Calcutta Council itself; while Siraj-ud-Doulah, even if he had not provoked his fate by his crimes, had clearly no right of hereditary succession, as his grandfather, Ali Virdi Khan, through whom he claimed, was but a recent usurper himself.[3] It was not even the substitution of a foreign and infidel power for a native government, having a common origin and common religion with the people. The Mohammedan rulers were no less aliens in blood and in religion, and had been fierce missionaries of the Moslem faith, making proselytes by the unsparing use of fire and sword; while it certainly cannot be said of the English, who first established their rule as sovereigns in India, that they made any ostentatious exhibition of Christianity either in their professions or their conduct. Their profound indifference to the faith of which they were nominally professors, made it easy for them to be unqualifiedly tolerant of the creeds, practices, and usages of the natives, and indeed to take under their protection their temples, their idols, their priests, and even rites not easily reconciled with European notions of common decency or common humanity. These considerations

[3] The same may be said of the Northern Circars, to which the Nizam and his French allies had no colour of right except that of their temporary conquest.

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will go far to account for the marvellous ease with which Lord Clive's territorial acquisitions were made, and the perfect acquiescence and absence of political disaffection with which those acquisitions have ever since been held.

But it is important not to confound Lord Clive's British India with the British India of the present day. It is very common to talk of the British rule in India as having endured for a century; and it is common to ask:—What have you done during that century? It is true that the British have had Bengal and the Northern Circars for more than a century, but that is not a fourth part of their actual dominion in India, and between the time of Lord Clive and the great proconsulate of the Marquis of Wellesley—nearly thirty years later—there was very little accession to the extent of the British dominions. The British had become no doubt the greatest of the Indian powers, but they were only one of many great Indian powers, very far indeed as yet from being what they now substantially are—The Indian Power—the Sovereigns of India. We shall find that their progress to that position was by many toilsome steps, through many vicissitudes and perils, yet to be narrated.

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CHAPTER III.

1766—1773. First Mysore War. Attack on Clive in Parliament. Reorganization of Company.

WHILE Clive was laying the broad foundations of the British dominion in the valley of the Ganges and along the shores of the Bay of Bengal, another distinguished and great adventurer was pursuing a course of like success in another part of the Indian peninsula.

Hyder Ali, a Mussulman of the humblest origin, and like Clive of great daring and skill as a soldier, and of wonderful capacity as a ruler, had raised himself from a captain of freebooters to be the commander-in-chief of the army of the Rajah of Mysore, a Hindoo prince. According to the usual course of things in India, he dethroned his master and usurped his throne; and by successful aggressions on his neighbours he enlarged his territories, and formed the extensive and powerful kingdom of Mysore, which extended to the Krishna on the north-east and to the Malabar coast on the west. The Madras authorities seeing, with alarm, the growth near them of this formidable power under a chief so able and so ambitious, entered into an alliance with the Nizam, and with some of the Mahratta chiefs, and declared war against him. This war raged for some years. Hyder

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succeeded in winning over from the English their allies, who joined his ranks, and one victory, that of Trincomalee, alone shed a momentary lustre on the British army. In this engagement Colonel Smith, with a force of 1500 Europeans and 9000 Sepoys, defeated the combined armies of Hyder and his allies; but the war was, on the whole, an inglorious and disastrous one for the English, and a peace was made in 1769, by which all parties were remitted to their original position. The expense of this war again drained the Indian treasuries, and threw the financial affairs of the Company at home into what seemed hopeless insolvency. At the same time that men were astounded by the unexpected disclosure of the hollowness of the fortunes of a Company that had seemed so prosperous and so powerful, their minds were disturbed by other sad news which came from Bengal.

"In the summer of 1770," writes Lord Macaulay, "the rain failed; the earth was parched up; the tanks were empty; the rivers shrank within their beds; and a famine, such as is known only in countries where every household depends for support on its own little patch of cultivation, filled the whole valley of the Ganges with misery and death. . . . The extent of the mortality was never ascertained, but it was popularly reckoned by millions. All men of common humanity were touched by the calamities of our unhappy subjects; and indignation soon began to mingle itself with pity. It was rumoured that the Company's servants had created the famine by engrossing all the rice of the country; that they had sold grain for eight, ten, twelve times the price at which they had bought it."

These rumours were not only believed at the time, but

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were credited long afterwards, and the writer of these pages has still a vivid recollection of how, many years afterwards, he was taught by his master to shudder at the crimes of the Englishmen, who had made enormous fortunes by the starvation of millions of their fellow-creatures. Lord Macaulay, however, justly concludes that these charges were unfounded. They had no other foundation than the dearness which such a famine must always produce in a country without commerce or accumulated wealth, and the popular outcry which at all times of scarcity is raised against forestallers and regraters—the real benefactors of their fellows under such a calamity. They were, nevertheless, generally believed; and, stirred by these things, the Parliament and people of England took thought of the affairs of India seriously, and even passionately. Two committees were appointed, by whom everything that had been done was rigorously investigated, and unsparingly exposed.

The great name, the great deeds, the great services of Lord Clive did not protect him from being subject to the most searching and most hostile inquisition, by men, many of whom were his bitter personal enemies for the good he had done, and most of them more or less influenced by the popular belief that, if he had been a great hero, he had also been a most unscrupulous and rapacious scoundrel. It was at length moved and carried in the House of Commons, that Clive had, by means of the power which he possessed as commander of the British forces in India, obtained large sums from Meer Jaffier; it was then moved that Lord Clive had abused his powers, and set an evil example to the servants of

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the public, but this motion the House declined to entertain. According to the convenient forms of the House the "previous question," that is to say, whether the resolution should or should not be put to the vote, was moved and carried in the negative, so avoiding any direct expression of opinion as to the truth of the condemnatory resolution itself. The friends of Lord Clive, emboldened by this success, moved and carried, "That Lord Clive did at the same time render great and meritorious services to his country." That such a man as Lord Clive, whose second administration had been so good and great, had so narrowly escaped a direct vote of censure from the representatives of the English people, lent additional force to the memorable general resolutions passed on the same occasion, viz.:—

"That acquisitions made by the arms of the State belong to the State alone, and that it is illegal in the servants of the State to appropriate such acquisitions to themselves. That this rule has been systematically violated by the English functionaries in Bengal."

The House of Commons were right in not passing the actual vote of censure, which it would have been impossible justly to follow by any confiscation of Clive's property. What had been done in the East, had been done by him as servant of the Company, at their expense and risk. The crown had given up to the Company the profits of their territorial acquisitions, and all the spoils of war. The breach of trust was towards them, and they had amply condoned and ratified the perquisites which their agent had taken for himself, while gaining an empire for them; and after the acts complained of they had invoked his

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aid to save them from ruin. But the resolutions and proceedings in Parliament were there for the future, as a warning of the stern relentlessness with which the English people would view oppression stained with personal corruption, and that far off as India was, stories of wrongs done there might easily rouse the terrible wrath of an English House of Commons. Not content with mere minatory resolutions, the legislature enacted, in express terms, that it should be a misdemeanour for any officer in the East to accept any present under any pretence from any native prince or person.

In the year 1773, and consequent upon the investigations of the House of Commons, was passed the first Act of Parliament for regulating the affairs of British India,[1] which may be considered as the real commencement of the British rule, properly so called. Then for the first time the British nation, as a nation, assumed the actual responsibility of the government of the vast territories, which had been so easily and so strangely won by the factors and servants of a trading corporation. The supreme Government of British India was vested in a Governor-General and a Council of four members at Fort William in Bengal (that is to say, Calcutta), who were to have a general control over the subordinate presidencies of Madras and Bombay; but the power of legislation was made subject to the control of a Supreme Court of Justice, which was at the same time established at Calcutta and more especially represented the paramount authority of the sovereign. All the legislative ordinances or regulations, promulgated by the Government, required for

[1] The Regulating Act.

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their validity that they should be registered in the Supreme Court of Justice. That court was the King's court, and every officer of the Company, and the Company itself, were subject to the jurisdiction and process of that tribunal, subject only to appeal to the Sovereign in Council.

The first Governor-General and Council were appointed by name in the act; but subject to that appointment the supreme control at home was still continued in the East India Company. The Directory at home was made, not expressly, but by an indirect operation of the act, practically an office for life. There were to be thenceforth twenty-four Directors, one-fourth of whom were to go out every year, their vacancies to be supplied by new men; but as the retiring members were, after the lapse of a year, again eligible, the practical working was that there were really thirty Directors for life, a fifth of them having a year's furlough by rotation, and the six who went out were re-elected almost as a matter of course at the end of their year's retirement. It became the avowed undertaking of the Directors as a body that they should in that respect act together; the six names were openly proposed as the "House List," with all the combined influence of the thirty, and of all the officers of the Company, and of the merchants, servants, and tradesmen who participated in its patronage and emoluments. Such a combination was, of course, irresistible. The case of a director not holding his office for life became an exceptional event in the history of the corporation. The Home Government of India became thus vested in a peculiar aristocracy—a kind of life peer-

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age, the rare vacancies in which were filled by election by the shareholders of the Company. By another change which was made a few years later (in 1781) the dividends were limited to eight per cent., but afterwards increased to 10*l.* 10*s.* per cent.; and the Company practically lost its true mercantile character, although it continued to trade for many years. After this change it was the ruler who traded, not the trader who ruled; the profits of the trading went into the treasury of the Government, and the shareholders, instead of dividing profits according to their more or less successful adventures, were merely annuitants upon the revenues of the State, and a very peculiar electoral body to elect the distributors of the Indian patronage—the Supreme Council of India. It was not, on the whole—singular as it may seem—a bad constitution of such an electoral body. The shareholders were for the most part wealthy city men, merchants and bankers, or Anglo-Indians who had invested part of their accumulations in Indian stock, and continued to take an interest in Indian affairs. In point of capacity to make a good election, the body of shareholders was eminently qualified; they had as a body no adverse or sinister interest to lead them to select other than fit men, and in one respect they had a strong personal interest in the same direction with their plain duty; the misgovernment of India could by no possibility be productive of the smallest profit to them, while the incapacity or misconduct of the Government might very possibly entail the loss of the country, and with it the loss of all the fortunes placed in India Stock.

The mode in which the patronage was practically

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exercised was also very peculiar, and worked on the whole not badly. Each Director had the power in his turn of nominating a youth to be a writer, that is to say to the first step in the civil service of India, or to be a cadet, that is to say the first step in the military service. The youths went out, to what was then a long and remote exile in India, where they rose in their respective services by seniority and by selection made by the local authorities, and pursued a career in which their original patron had no further voice and generally took no further interest, having by the nomination discharged all claim upon him. The last grades of all, that is to say the seats in Council, to which near the end of their long service a few of them might aspire, were in the patronage of the Court of Directors, who had no motive and no interest to lead them to select any but men who had distinguished themselves in the service of the public. The raw material, which was thus sent out to India to be fashioned into administrators and warriors, was very good; sturdy youths, a large proportion of them cadets of old Scotch families, a race as yet unrivalled in the qualities and arts by which poor adventurers win wealth and position abroad. It required courage, it indicated ambition and masculine energy to abandon home and friends for a long exile under a tropical sun, and these were great qualities. The young men were immediately trained for work by work. Grave official duties and responsibilities were thrown upon them at an age at which home-staying youths were still boys in leading-strings, and they had no one to rely on but themselves. No old servant of the Company in India had any cause or motive for favouritism towards the raw lad who was, like all his competitors,

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the nominee of some little known Director, and probably nominated in return for the vote of some wholly unknown shareholder. The rules and traditions of the service secured to all a certain amount of safe routine promotion; but the exigencies of war, the needs of a difficult diplomacy, the administration of the new acquisition of a growing empire, constantly pressed upon the Calcutta authorities, who found it pleasanter and easier for themselves to have able and good subordinates and agents than ineffective and bad ones. The highest qualities of soldier, administrator, diplomatist, were therefore in great request and sure of great reward; and it was natural that these qualities should be developed in proportion to the demand. This is the real explanation of the wonderful talent and conduct, civil and military, of which throughout the history of the British rule in India we find such abundant evidence.

From 1773 it was illegal to accept bribe or gratuity, and purity of hands became by degrees the point of honour of the service. Venality and falsehood were the characteristics of the native, and after the men of the first evil period had passed away and the Services began to be a great official aristocracy, the lordly Sahib would have lost caste if he had condescended to the baseness of venality or the meanness of a lie. Directors and officials were alike unfeignedly desirous of securing the good government and promoting the prosperity of the natives. There was, however, one fatal defect in this so goodly structure:—it was too weak for the work. India was in truth a very poor country, poor in substantial wealth, still poorer in nominal wealth as measured by prices or the value of money, and English officials required, as a compensation for their

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irksome work, salaries far larger than those in England, the richest country in the world. Every English official in India was a Gulliver amongst Lilliputians, and consumed their substance accordingly. With the wages of a labourer at three halfpence a day a private English soldier in India cost the earnings of forty labourers, and an official with 5000*l.* a year, devoured annually the substance of 2000 natives. The supply of English officials was therefore necessarily utterly inadequate; a district as large and as populous as the county of York had perhaps one Englishman to govern it. The Government could not or would not trust natives with offices of power or distinction or of great emolument. The result was that British India was scarcely governed at all; and so far as it was governed, was governed by a few Englishmen through the agency of obscure natives, under no effectual supervision or responsibility, ill paid, not honoured or respected by their alien masters, and therefore without self-respect. India was according to all our notions in many respects a barbarous country; it had no roads, no judiciary, no magistracy, no system of laws, no police, no municipal organization, no education except for an infinitesimal part of the people. To take Bengal alone, all these things had to be introduced in a country as large as France, the entire rack-rent of which was taken by the Government and amounted to less than three millions sterling a year.

The first well-intentioned efforts of the Government, to provide for an effectual administration of justice, proved singularly unfortunate. The English judges taken from the civil service were men wholly unversed in jurisprudence, not well acquainted with the language, the character or the usages of the people,

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and to a great extent dependent on their venal native advisers and assistants; they were misled by them, and deceived by the suitors. The system of procedure was cumbrous, dilatory, and expensive, provoked litigation, and, as is credibly said, engendered a chicanery which surpassed anything known in the practices of the lowest pettifoggers in England. It is stated and believed that the courts did far more wrong and injustice than they redressed, created more fraud than they repressed, gave a premium to forgery and perjury, and proved in the hands of the native subordinates and practitioners a powerful machinery for extortion and oppression. Evils like these are slow to cure; many of them never reach the ears of the higher authorities who have so much to attend to, and men learn to submit to them without disturbing the repose of their rulers, and come to consider them as normal and necessary evils of life like those of climate. People go on for years and generations, even in England, with their air and water poisoned, and subject to the fevers of malaria, until they are aroused by some more than ordinary epidemic visitation to take the precautionary measures which were at all times within their easy reach. In the year 1864 the authorities in India first began to consider the simple sanitary means by which to prevent the decimation of the British soldiery which had been going on for a century, every man of whom is worth probably, in hard money to the state, a thousand pounds. It is therefore little to be wondered at, that in India evils which have become chronic were left uncared for and uncured, when the cure would have involved a vast expenditure of money, and the public exchequer was drained and without resources.

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CHAPTER IV.

1774—1785. Warren Hastings.

UNDER the constitution of the Act of Parliament of 1773[1] Warren Hastings, the governor of Fort William, became Governor-General of India. His rule lasted until the beginning of the year 1785. The name of Warren Hastings, his conduct and his deeds, fill deservedly a large space in the history of the English rulers in the East, a larger place than those of any other person; but they are more important with reference to his personal biography, to the course of political warfare by contending parties in the British Parliament, to the history of British oratory and literature, than they are to the story of the growth of the British power in India. The Anglo-Indian empire at the close of his rule was in extent substantially the same as when he assumed it; but he left it somewhat enlarged and consolidated, and he had made great progress in its internal organization. The character of his rule is summed up by Lord Macaulay thus:—

"It is, indeed, impossible to deny that in the great art of inspiring large masses of human beings with confidence and attachment, no ruler ever surpassed Hastings. If he had made himself popular with the

[1] The Regulating Act.

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English, by giving up the Bengalees to extortion and oppression, or if on the other hand he had conciliated the Bengalees and alienated the English, there would have been no cause for wonder. What is peculiar to him is, that being the chief of a small band of strangers, who exercised boundless power over a great indigenous population, he made himself beloved both by the subject many and by the dominant few. The affection felt for him by the civil service was singularly ardent and constant. Through all his disasters and perils his brethren stood by him with steadfast loyalty. The army at the same time loved him as armies have seldom loved any but the greatest chiefs who have led them to victory. While such was his empire over the hearts of his countrymen, he enjoyed among the natives a popularity such as no other governor has been able to attain."

Under the Nawabs the hurricane of Mahratta cavalry had passed annually over the rich alluvial plain. But even the Mahratta shrank from a conflict with the mighty children of the sea, and the immense rice harvests of the Lower Ganges were safely gathered in under the protection of the English sword. The first English conquerors had been more rapacious and merciless even than the Mahrattas, but that generation had passed away. Defective as was the police, heavy as were the public burthens, it is probable that the oldest man in Bengal could not recollect a season of equal security and prosperity. For the first time within living memory the province was placed under a government strong enough to prevent others from robbery, and not inclined to play the robber itself. Even now, after the lapse of a century, the natives

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of India still talk of him as the greatest of the English.

The position of India when Warren Hastings became Governor-General was, so far as is now material to our narrative, substantially this. The English were masters of the whole lower valley of the Ganges, part of which, the extensive and rich district of Benares, was in the hands of a great feudatory chief, Cheyte Sing, Rajah of Benares, who held of them, and paid them a large annual tribute. Immediately adjoining were the territories of the Nawab of Oude, nominally a Vizier under the suzerainty of the Mogul, but really an independent sovereign. The English had on the coast the country around Madras, and the Northern Circars. The Carnatic was in the hands of their dependent ally the Nawab of the Carnatic, who was under the acknowledged control of the Madras Council, and under the influence, or rather in the toils, of discreditable English adventurers, with whom high officials of the Presidency were more than suspected of being in league. Above the plains of the Carnatic was the extensive kingdom of Mysore; and above that was the territory of the Nizam, which in its shrunken state may still be seen occupying a large part of the map of India, under the name of Hyderabad. It has been mentioned that Hyder, the sovereign of Mysore, had successfully usurped the throne of his master. He began his career in 1749, but did not set aside his sovereign, and begin to reign over Mysore until 1760, the same year in which the English had established themselves as the protectors of the Carnatic. The Nizam's position was this. The founder of the house was the Nizam-al-Mulk—the lieutenant of the Mogul. After a rule of

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thirty-one years he had died in 1748, and had been succeeded by his son, who, assassinated in 1750, was succeeded by a grandson, assassinated in 1757. His successor reigned until 1763, when he was put to death by his brother, the Nizam of Anglo-Indian history.

On the western coast the English had the island of Bombay, the island of Salsette, and some few other places of no great extent or importance. Above and around the territory of the Nizam were the Mahratta states, which comprised in the aggregate half the peninsula within the Sutlej, extending from near the mouth of the Indus in the west to the British frontier in the east. The Mahrattas were adventurers, whose establishment in India presents a striking resemblance to the establishment of the Normans in so many parts of Europe. They were land pirates instead of being sea pirates. The chiefs of bands of robbers became the lords, or, as they would have been called in the west, counts and dukes of counties and duchies, won by the sword and held by it. They seem all to have acknowledged a feudal subjection to the house of Sevajee, the great founder of the Mahratta power, and contemporary with Aurungzebe. At the time we have arrived at in our story, the titular sovereign of the Mahrattas was the descendant of Sevajee, but the real ruler was the Peshwa or hereditary prime minister, who kept the nominal chief of the empire in honourable, or at least luxurious, duress at Sattara, the nominal seat of empire, while he himself lived in regal splendour and exercised regal sway at Poonah, the real Mahratta court. But according to the strangely complicated order of things

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in the chaotic state of what had been the Mogul Empire, the office of Peshwa or prime minister, which had thus usurped the sovereignty, was itself filled by an usurper, whose title was disputed by a deposed and exiled Peshwa, Ragolia Rao, who had taken shelter at Bombay. The other great Mahratta chiefs or sovereigns were the heads of the houses of Scindiah and Holkar, whose Principalities still exist; the Bensla Rajah, who had the vast domains of Berar and Nagpore, now known as the Central Provinces; and the Guicowar or Rajah of Banda, whose dominion was and is to the north-west above Bombay. Besides the great lords, who filled the place of kings and electors in Germany, there were many minor chiefs and subfeudatories, forming a system as complicated as that of the old Germanic empire. The great lords above named were individually far too powerful to pay a willing or a constant allegiance to the Peshwa, and were as ready to intrigue or to combine against him as a German king or duke was against the Emperor. They were all, however, by religion Hindoos, and their common religion, their descent and nationality as Mahrattas, did form some kind of bond of union between them, and there was a traditional feeling of fealty due to the Peshwa as the central authority of all the Mahrattas. At this time the Great Mogul was in truth a prisoner in the hands of the Mahrattas, who, under the guise of allies, were in full possession as masters at Delhi. Amongst other things they had enforced the cession to them of the territories of Allahabad and Corah, which had, as we have seen, been reclaimed for the Delhi sovereign by Lord Clive. The French and the Dutch had still their

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settlements in India, and hostilities arising out of American affairs were imminent, both with France and Holland.

Causes of quarrel could not fail to arise in such a state of things. A French agent had arrived at Poonah, and entered into negotiations with the Peshwa, who was believed to have ceded to the French a port on the Malabar coast for the reception of a flotilla and armament expected from Europe.

Warren Hastings showed himself equal to this great emergency, and took his measures with great promptitude and vigour. The military operations were, however, of a chequered character. He had little difficulty on his own, the Bengal side of India, in wresting from the Mahrattas the provinces of Allahabad and Corah, which he then sold to his ally, the Nawab of Oude, for a considerable sum of money; and treating the Mahrattas as the real recipients of the annual tribute or rent-charge of 260,000*l.* a year, payable to the Great Mogul for the provinces of Bengal, he refused further to pay it and got rid of it for ever.

The Bombay army, which had advanced with the pretender Ragoba towards Poonah, was not so fortunate. It was surrounded, and had to make a humiliating and discreditable surrender, but by the great energy of Hastings, seconded by an able general, Goddard, this disaster was retrieved in a campaign, distinguished as usual by victories achieved by a handful of Europeans and a small force of Sepoys against numbers apparently overwhelming. The military prestige of the English was no little increased by a specially brilliant feat of arms, the storming of the strong fortress of Gwalior

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by Captain Popham and a small body of English troops.

While everything, however, seemed to be favourable for the success of Hastings' great policy of breaking the formidable power of the ruling Peshwa and his allies, he was suddenly arrested by news of disasters in Madras, still more serious than those of the Bombay army which he had just succeeded in retrieving. The Government of Madras appears at that time to have been thoroughly bad. Incapable of anything greater than sharing in the spoils of the Nawab of Arcot, they were deceived in their alliances, blundering in their policy, and unfortunate in their commanders. Opposed to them was the formidable Hyder Ali, their superior in state-craft, and even for a time in military skill and energy. Burke's description of Hyder's great irruption into the Carnatic is a familiar specimen of the great orator's eloquence, and is probably not much exaggerated in its vivid and impassioned expressions. The fortunes of the English in the south were in truth reduced to the lowest ebb. Hastings was obliged to abandon all his schemes against the Mahrattas, and to devote the whole resources of his power to the succour of Madras; he sent all the forces he could muster under the veteran Sir Eyre Coote, one of Clive's captains, to oppose Hyder; nor was Hyder, great captain as he was, able to withstand the British forces under such a commander. With 9000 men only, Coote routed the grand army of Hyder, under the latter's personal command, at the great battle of Porto-Novo. Considering that the enemy's army was led by Hyder himself, and comprised a large force of veterans trained by him in a

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long course of successful wars of aggression, this victory is perhaps surpassed by none that the English had won in India, even under Clive himself.

Madras was once more saved for the English, and the Carnatic again recovered for their dependent ally. Hyder and his army were, however, not destroyed not cowed by the one great blow, as according to the precedents of Indian wars they should have been, and the war dragged on. Hyder and Coote both died before its conclusion, but Hyder's son and successor, Tippoo, was still a formidable foe. The French, moreover, intervening in the contest, appeared on the coast with a powerful fleet under a distinguished commander, De Suffren, who seems to have been slightly more than a match for his opponent Admiral Hughes. Many indecisive sea-battles were fought without much loss on either side, but with practical results in favour of the French admiral. Tippoo, assisted by another Frenchman, Mons. Lally, succeeded also on land in inflicting a heavy blow on the English under Colonel Braithwaite, whose army of 100 Europeans and 1800 Sepoys was wholly destroyed or captured.

It was therefore welcome news that arrived from Europe of peace between England and France, by which the Indian powers were at once deprived of their French allies. The English finances and resources were well-nigh exhausted, and Hastings was glad to conclude a general peace, by which every one of the combatants was remitted generally to his ancient possessions and position. This, however, did not include the restitution of the territories of Allahabad and Corah, which remained with the Vizier of Oude, nor the restoration of the tribute to Delhi, their exemption

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from which the British thenceforth continued to maintain.

This may be considered the close of the great government of Warren Hastings; but there were certain episodes in his rule which, comparatively temporary in their character and unimportant as to their permanent effects on the power or prosperity of British India, have for many reasons become of enduring interest to the student of the history of the British rule there. Pressed by the pecuniary difficulties occasioned by the arduous wars in which he was engaged, Warren Hastings, in order to get money, sold the services of his army to his ally, the Nawab of Oude, to enable the latter to subdue a gallant people, the Rohillas, who had long been established as the owners of the fertile province of Rohilcund. The arms of the British proved immeasurably superior here, as everywhere, to the best and bravest of the natives; but performing the disgraceful functions of mercenaries under hired *condottieri* in an unjust war, with which their rulers had no legitimate concern, which affected neither the honour nor interest of England or Bengal, the decisive victory which they gained was a lasting disgrace to them. There was the further stain on their fame that they had to stand by while their dastardly allies, for whom they had fought and conquered, laid waste the country with ruthless cruelty, wantonly inflicting on the brave Rohillas, after their submission, all the worst horrors of a devastating war.

Pressed by the same pecuniary difficulties, Warren Hastings took a still more discreditable step. The Nawab's mother and grandmother, the Begums, or dowager princesses of Oude, were possessed of princely

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domains and supposed to be possessed of large treasures, estimated by the popular voice at some millions sterling. After repeated extortions by their son and grandson, an arrangement had been made by the interposition and under the guarantee of the British Government itself, that the Begums should on certain terms (which they duly performed) be left in quiet enjoyment of their remaining property. Hastings, however, wanted money; the Nawab of Oude was largely indebted to the British Government for the hire of their mercenaries, and was without means of satisfying their demand; and it was agreed between the English Governor-General and the prince, son and grandson of the ladies, that these should be stripped of their domains and remaining treasures, and that the Bengal Government should accept them in satisfaction of their claims against Oude. The prince's heart failed when it came to the execution of this nefarious treaty, but Hastings was stern, and by a succession of unmanly cruelties and gross indignities he compelled the Begums at length to produce out of their concealed hoards no less than 1,200,000*l.* sterling. The pretext alleged, probably as false as it was insufficient, in justification of Hastings' conduct, was punishment for some supposed participation by the ladies or their agents in tumults which had been recently excited in the city of Benares.

Another act of a similar character has next to be recorded. It has been mentioned that the Zemindary of Benares was held as a *feud* by the tributary or vassal Rajah of Benares, Cheyte Singh. He was liable to the payment of an annual tribute, which appears to have been duly and punctually paid. Hastings, as liege lord, claimed the right of exacting

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from him, as vassal, in time of war extraordinary contributions and assistance. Cheyte Singh submitted to one demand after another, but after awhile, under pretence of poverty, refused or evaded the payment of a demand for 50,000*l.* The refusal or evasion was treated by Hastings as a crime, for which he summarily imposed a penalty of 500,000*l.*, which the unfortunate Cheyte Singh was unable or unwilling to pay. He was arrested by order of the stern Governor. The people, attached to their ruler, who had governed them mildly and well, rose in tumultuous insurrection. The Sepoys and their English officers were overpowered in the streets of Benares, and killed, or as it is called massacred, although massacre is hardly a term applicable to the slaughter by infuriated insurgents of an intrusive armed force, which had outraged and then held in prison the person of their prince.

The tumult or insurrection extended to the surrounding country, which rose against the English. Hastings was himself for a few days in imminent personal peril from this outbreak, but his courage and resources did not fail him. Against the disciplined forces, which hastened to his rescue, the armed multitude which followed the standard of Cheyte Singh was of course unavailing. The mob, for it was no more, dispersed, and the Rajah fled. His country was forthwith annexed, and the title of Rajah was given to a relative, but as a pensioner only on the Bengal revenues, which are still charged with the annual payment to the titular Rajah of Benares. By this annexation obtained by rapacious violence, the Company, or rather the Indian Government, in truth gained but little substantial advantage. The treasure

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discovered was comparatively small, and went as prize-money to the soldiers. The annual profit was 200,000*l.* a year, but with it came the burthen and expense of ruling the territory, which, in the hands of a Rajah protected and used with just liberality, would in all probability have proved a source of strength to the protecting power. It was a blunder and a crime.

The history of the rule of Warren Hastings is also much taken up with the dissensions and quarrels between himself and a very hostile majority of his Council, and between the Government and the Supreme Court of Justice. The first was determined by the casual reduction of the number of the Council to three besides the Governor himself. Hastings commanded one vote, and by the constitution of the Council he had a casting vote, so that he became paramount. The mischief of such a dissension was prevented afterwards by giving the Governor-General power in cases of emergency to act without or to overrule his Council, and the Government became in fact and in name that of the Governor-General in Council, not Governor-General and Council, a distinction verbally small, but practically all-important. The quarrel between the Government and the Supreme Court arose from an intemperate and excessive assertion of power by the latter, distasteful, offensive and oppressive beyond measure to the native higher classes, and destructive, if submitted to, of all the legitimate authority of the Executive. This was also determined by an expedient of more than doubtful morality. The Chief Justice of the Sovereign's Court was conciliated, or as some people call it, bribed, by being appointed to the addi-

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tional office of Chief Justice of the Company, with a large salary. As soon as this transaction was known in England, the evil, which had thus been dealt with, was acknowledged to be a serious one, and was for the future prevented by an enactment of the British Legislature, defining and restricting the powers of the Supreme Court, but the Chief Justice, Sir Elijah Impey, was himself denounced in Parliament for his share in the transaction, and was recalled and disgraced. He narrowly escaped the legal consequences of an impeachment, but has not escaped other punishment. Historian after historian, Lord Macaulay especially, has exposed him in the pillory to a merciless pelting, and his name has been associated with everything low and base. It may be doubted (as Lord Mahon, after perusing the whole case, evidently does doubt) whether injustice has not been done by a vituperation that seems exaggerated. It is at all events clear that he never in fact took the bribe, the salary attached to his new office, and there is no reason to doubt his assertion, that he from the first expressed a resolution, which he acted on, of not taking the pay of the office, unless he obtained the opinion of the English Lord Chancellor that he could legally and properly do so, an opinion which it is almost needless to say he never got.

A painful incident occurred which was by universal public opinion connected with the struggles for power between Hastings and his Councillors. A wealthy Hindoo, of high caste and eminent position amongst the natives, was brought to trial for forgery, convicted, and sentenced to death, and did actually suffer, being publicly executed by hanging. Men and women were no doubt then and long after mercilessly strangled in

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England for this offence by the score, but it was an English punishment, and there was no known law in India by which Nuncomar was liable, if really guilty, to the extreme penalty, which was a shocking violation of all the native notions of justice. Nuncomar had been an ally of the hostile Councillors, who had brought him forward as an accuser of Warren Hastings, and a witness against him; and men saw in that the real cause of his punishment. The Hindoos trembled, and learnt how dangerous it was to provoke the hostility of Hastings.

Hastings came home, leaving the British Indian dominions in peace and security, having by his vigorous administration and able policy carried the state safely through the great perils by which it was encompassed, and having succeeded in establishing alliances apparently durable with the powerful princes around, who had been confirmed in their dread of the British power and arms. He came fondly expecting to be received with all the rewards, the peerage, the hereditary pension, the public honours, which would have been ordinarily considered as due for such eminent success in such a position, and would have been ordinarily given without hesitation or stint. A different fate awaited him. What now concerns us is that the British public and the British Parliament were not dazzled by his successes, nor willing to pass unquestioned the crimes which were imputed to him. The unprovoked aggressions on the Rohillas, the oppressive dealings with Cheyte Singh, the cruelties shown to the unfortunate Begums, the bargain with Sir Elijah Impey, the case of Nuncomar, were denounced in the House of Commons in terms of unqualified

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condemnation. The ablest men, the most eloquent speakers of a Parliament never surpassed for ability or eloquence, joined in the attack which came from the opposition. William Pitt, the great Minister of the day, and his able adviser, Dundas, professed themselves unable to justify or extenuate. The great spectacle was exhibited of an impeachment by the whole Commons of England, who presented to the House of Lords the Ex-Governor General of India as a person guilty of high crimes and misdemeanour. What were the Rohillas, what was Cheyte Singh, what were Oude princesses, what was Nuncomar to the English public? Nothing. But it was much to them, that, as they thought, foul wrongs had been done by a high English officer, in abuse of the great powers which had been entrusted to him by the English nation. The members appointed by the House of Commons to conduct this prosecution were thoroughly and passionately in earnest. They entirely believed in the great guilt of the man and in the great duty which that guilt had imposed on the nation, and their speeches, which rose to the grandeur of the occasion, will long be read as models of English eloquence.

The House of Lords refused, however, to be moved from the formal technical course of English criminal proceedings. They held that a public man, charged by the people of England at their bar with official misconduct, was entitled as much as any other criminal to every protection which the law and practice of our criminal courts throw around every accused person. They required that every part of every charge should be proved by strict legal, formal, and sufficient evidence, refusing to listen to notoriety or hearsay, or

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to suspicion of motives. For eight years the prosecution dragged its slow length along; the public became wearied; other matters of moment and interest arose in the political world; and at length, by a great majority, but in a very thin House of Lords, Warren Hastings was acquitted of all the charges. Looking back at this distance of time at the whole case, it seems now difficult to come to any other conclusion, than that both the House of Commons and the House of Lords were right. The matters charged were too grave, and apparently too well substantiated by strong proofs, for the House of Commons, in due discharge of its duty as the Great Inquest of the nation, to allow them to pass unimpeached, but before the House of Lords there was no proof that there was venality or other personal corruption. In Nuncomar's case, where there was the strongest suspicion of private motive, there was no legal crime imputable to the Governor-General. Nuncomar had been tried, convicted, and sentenced by the King's Court, a court of independent and even superior jurisdiction. In regard to the other cases it was felt that Hastings' conduct was honest to this extent, that they were public acts of policy, done on public grounds for the public purposes of the state, and it was concluded that they were matters for which a Governor might properly be recalled and disgraced, and exposed to what is after all a very severe punishment, a parliamentary vote of disapprobation and censure; but that an impeachment was more properly for a minion who had abused the indulgence of a weak sovereign; for persons who had conspired with a wicked sovereign against the freedom of Parliament or the rights of the

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subject; for a minister who had used his official position for pecuniary gain or the gratification of revenge or spite. It was not proved that Hastings' hands were soiled, or that he had acted from personal malice, and the House of Lords was, therefore, probably right in dismissing him from the bar, with no further punishment than the prosecution itself had been. Even that was in truth a tremendous punishment; he was, it is said, ruined pecuniarily by the expenditure incurred by him publicly in his defence, and privately in various modes resorted to of influencing public opinion in his favour. The glorious afternoon of his life which he would have enjoyed was utterly destroyed. It is difficult to estimate what in all probability he lost. Honours, distinctions, public employment, high office, the most brilliant career, were open to a man of his wonderful powers and administrative skill. He lost them for wrongs done to a few poor natives far away in India.

This was the second great lesson which the Parliament and people of England taught the rulers of their Indian dominions. Clive, notwithstanding his brilliant deeds, and after his second administration so great and good, scarcely escaped a parliamentary censure for his early corrupt malversation in office; Hastings narrowly escaped a conviction for the oppression, exaction, and cruelty which stained an administration so successful and so popular. So long as the memory of the parliamentary proceedings against Clive survives, so long as the story of the impeachment of Warren Hastings is read,—so long will it be before any official in the East will venture to repeat their offences. Let those who are disposed to blame the English nation for their rule in the East ponder a little on these things, and ask

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themselves, what country, in what age, has so felt for wrong done in a subject or conquered land, or has so cared that such wrong should not be repeated.

The impeachment of Warren Hastings was not the only result of the recent proceedings in India, nor was his conduct the only thing which attracted the attention of the English legislature. At Madras certain persons, amongst whom the name of Paul Benfield has remained conspicuously gibbetted as of pre-eminent infamy, were engaged in swindling and plundering the Nawab of Arcot, a weak, foolish, and apparently profligate prince. It appeared to the Government of the time (the Government of which Mr. Fox was the prominent member), and to the House of Commons, that "disorders of an alarming nature and magnitude have long prevailed and do still continue and increase in the management of the territorial possessions, the revenues, and the commerce of this kingdom in the East Indies." It was proposed to vest the home government of India in certain Commissioners appointed under an Act entirely abrogating all the powers of the Court of Directors and proprietors, and various stringent provisions were prepared for the prevention of peculation and oppression, and for the protection of the native princes and people.

The bills for this purpose, known in English history as Mr. Fox's India Bills, were passed by the House of Commons, but through the hostility and intrigues of the King, who saw in them a dangerous addition to the power and patronage of ministers whom he disliked, were thrown out in the House of Lords. The King dismissed his Ministers, dissolved the Parliament, and, succeeding in the elections beyond all calculation

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and hope, secured a majority for his Minister, Mr. Pitt, and a triumph for the Tory party which was never permanently or substantially interrupted for nearly fifty years.

The absolute abrogation of the power of the Company was postponed for eighty years, but notwithstanding the defeat of Mr. Fox's sweeping measures, it was felt even by their opponents, that it was necessary to make better provisions for the government of British India and the protection of the natives.

Mr. Pitt brought in and passed his measures for that purpose, and by his bill was created the Board of Control. That is to say, although the Company was retained and the powers of the Court of Directors nominally continued, everything was made subject to the Board, or rather in effect to the Minister for India, an office which was created under the title of "President of the Board of Commissioners for the affairs of India," the legal name for that which the public always persisted in calling the Board of Control. No despatch could be sent out until sanctioned by the President; every despatch proposed could be altered by him at his pleasure, and the Directors were obliged to send it out as altered, even if the alteration were exactly to reverse the original, disapproving instead of approving, forbidding instead of authorizing; the Board could also call on the Directors to originate a despatch on any subject, to be submitted for revision and alteration. All high political matters were withdrawn from the body of Directors and placed in a secret committee of their body, who alone communicated upon them with the Board. The patronage, however, remained vested in the Directors as before,

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except that the selection of persons for the highest offices, the Governor-General, the Governors, the Commander-in-Chief, required the concurrence of both authorities, and each authority had the power of recall. The most singular scheme of government perhaps ever devised. How it worked at all is a marvel, and that it should have worked not badly on the whole, is creditable to the practical good sense of English public men as administrators. The contrivance by which wranglings and disputes between the two bodies were avoided was a very simple and very ingenious one. Such wranglings and disputes between public bodies, or public persons, who come into collision mostly originate in some feelings of wounded self-love. Nobody likes to have his work openly put aside as worthless, or shown up as imperfect. Nobody likes to be treated as a school-boy to send up his exercises to a schoolmaster for correction. This was avoided thus. When any despatch had to be sent to India, the proper officer of the Company in communication with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman (the Chairs, as they were technically called), or with the Directors who especially attended to the particular subject, prepared a draft which went to the proper officer of the Board, who in communication with the President made suggestions, alterations, and observations, upon which the latter and the Chairs privately and unofficially conferred. By these "preliminary communications" the draft was unofficially settled. The draft so settled was converted at the India House into the despatch, which was formally sent by the Court of Directors to the Board, and was almost as of course approved there without any alteration. This complication, delay and enormous

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waste of governing power were superadded to a system already cumbrous, complicated and dilatory in India itself, where every suggestion of a commissioner or collector had to be submitted to the Governor in Council, and in the minor Presidencies again to the Governor-General in Council. It is singular how in politics as in mechanics the progress is slow from cumbrous and complicated machinery to simplicity and directness of action. How long was it before the original plan of throwing water into the cylinder of a steam engine was improved by condensing the steam in a separate condenser, and again before that was superseded by the simple plan of letting the steam at the end of each upward and downward stroke of the piston find its own way into the air? How many years was steam power employed by a series of ingenious movements in propelling hammers before Mr. Nasmyth suggested the simple expedient of attaching the hammer to the piston? So it has been with the government of India, as will be more fully seen in the sequel.

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CHAPTER V.

1786—1793. Lord Cornwallis. Third Mysore War. Permanent Settlement.

LORD CORNWALLIS was selected as a person of sufficent station, weight, and dignity to restrain and control the supposed propensities of the Indian officials to aggression and plunder. His mission was to inaugurate the reign of peaceful policy which had been prescribed, and to consolidate the British power in the territories, which they had acquired, by introducing a civilized rule of law and justice, and by protecting the British subjects there from injustice, violence, and oppression, and the native princes from frauds and exactions. All this was still to do; and he found an Augean stable of the old corruption to clear. He was minded bravely to bend himself to this great work, convinced that peace has its triumphs greater than those of war, and he flattered himself that he should return to England with a full budget of reforms effected and good done.

Man proposes in vain. Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General chosen expressly for peace, who was to abstain from territorial extension and from entangling alliances, was obliged to embark in a most arduous war; to make large territorial additions to the dominions of the Company; and to enter into a system of Indian alliances vaster than any yet made.

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In 1789 Tippoo Sultan, the sovereign of Mysore, made an unprovoked attack on the Rajah of Travancore (a small state to the south still visible on the map of India), an ancient ally of the British, whose possessions they were bound to protect by the engagements of a treaty as far back as the year 1769.

The forces and finances of British India were at the time ill prepared for war. Tippoo, on the other hand, was for all purposes of war the most powerful prince in India. His kingdom was naturally strong from its occupying the plateau of the hill country, accessible from the plains only by a few difficult passes, which were all in his hands and defended by several strong fortresses. His finances were in good condition, and he had laboured sedulously in enlarging and disciplining his army. Through these passes it was easy for him to descend into the plains and ravage the Carnatic, as his father and he had before done; while it was very difficult for an army to advance through the passes to attack him in any vulnerable point of his dominions. Madras was the only place from which the British could attack him, except through the dominions of the Nizam and the Mahrattas. Lord Cornwallis felt, however, that he could not escape the war, unless Tippoo, upon his summons and remonstrance, should withdraw from his hostile proceedings against Travancore and return to his own country. Such summons and remonstrance were made in vain. Any further delay in coming to the assistance of their ally would not only have been a breach of the plighted faith of the British, and have for ever forfeited their character in the eyes of all the Indian powers, but would certainly have encouraged Tippoo in further acts of aggression and insult. War

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was therefore declared. Luckily for the English, Tippoo's aggressive policy had equally irritated and alarmed his two powerful neighbours, the Nizam and the Peshwa, spoils from whom had made up a great part of his kingdom. They were, therefore, ready and anxious to join in a defensive and offensive alliance with the British against Tippoo. The sense of common danger which led to this common action, and the greatness of the danger, are best evinced by the fact that the Nizam was, like Tippoo, a Mohammedan prince, and yet felt compelled to join in a confederacy with an idolatrous Brahmin and an infidel Frank against a true believer. Lord Cornwallis entered into this alliance, which stipulated for common measures under the English direction, and for an equal partition of the countries to be wrested from the enemy. The military assistance rendered by the forces of the allies was not without its value, by diverting some of Tippoo's armies and by depriving him of the resources of the territories invaded by them; but it was of more value as facilitating the obtaining of supplies, and giving access to British forces from Bombay to co-operate with the main army from Madras. The war lasted three years. The first campaign in 1790, although marked by the usual superiority of the British in the field, and their usual success in taking fortresses by escalade and assault, was, on the whole, not very successful, and was chequered by a disastrous retreat of part of the British forces under Captain Floyd. This was in itself an event of no great importance, and in any other part of the world would have been deemed one of the accidents of war which must be expected; but in India the slightest check, the smallest disaster

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to the British army weakened their prestige, and, being magnified by rumour, tended to give confidence to the enemy and to create a panic in their allies.

Lord Cornwallis prepared, therefore, for a vigorous campaign in the next year, 1791. He proceeded himself to Madras, personally to assume the command, and having placed himself at the head of a large army, proceeded to invade Mysore, through the passes, from the plains; while he directed General Abercromby to invade from the Bombay side, and at the same time required his allies the Nizam and the Peshwa to advance with their forces.

First marching as if to attack by two passes called Amboor and Baramahal, and turning suddenly to the north and then to the west, Cornwallis gained access to the table-land of Mysore, through the undefended pass of Moogla, and proceeded to invest the very important town and fortress of Bangalore, which was taken by assault, almost in the presence of Tippoo's whole army, which was encamped a short distance off. He then advanced rapidly towards Seringapatam, the capital of Mysore, within a few miles of which Tippoo gave battle to arrest his further progress, and was signally defeated. Everything then seemed open to Seringapatam, but Cornwallis's draught cattle were perishing, and his supplies were on the eve of being exhausted. He had no cavalry of his own to keep open the communications, and the numerous cavalry of his ally, the Nizam, had failed to perform this—their part of the task—or to keep off Tippoo's horse, which completely cut the English commander off from all knowledge of the movements of the Mahratta auxiliaries, whom he had been expecting. Under these

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circumstances, when the prize was almost within his reach, he was obliged to retire from Seringapatam; first warning General Abercromby, who had arrived within fifty miles, also to make good his retreat. Cornwallis destroyed his battering-train and heavy baggage, and had to distribute his stores of food amongst the men.

He had scarcely, however, begun his retrograde movement when a large body of cavalry appeared, who turned out to be the friendly Mahratta army so long expected. If they had arrived a few days earlier, or had even given intimation of their approach, the retreat would have been unnecessary. It was now too late to return upon Seringapatam; but the arrival of the Mahratta army brought plenty with it, and ample means of transport, and so saved the British army from the more serious losses and disasters, which might have attended a forced retreat, through a hostile country, with numerous cavalry to follow and harass them.

Although the capture of Seringapatam was thus abandoned for that campaign, Lord Cornwallis did not slacken in the other operations of the war. He applied himself to the reduction of the numerous hill-forts. One of them was the fort of Nundydroog, on a granite rock of great height, inaccessible except on one side, and defended by a large garrison under one of Tippoo's best officers. After a siege of twenty-two days it was taken by assault. There was another fortress on the road to Seringapatam called Savendroog, also situated on a granite mountain, eight miles in circumference at the base, and divided into two forts. The eastern fort was taken by an escalade up a steep precipice, and so suddenly, that the garrison—com-

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pletely surprised—fled without resistance into the other fort, into which the British followed with the fugitives, and so carried the whole place without the loss of a man.

Ootradroog, another fortress, defended by seven distinct lines of ramparts, one behind the other, was taken much in the same manner, and almost with the same ease. One piece of good fortune, and one only, fell to Tippoo's lot amidst these losses. Coimbatore was held by Lieutenant Chalmers with a force of 120 native irregulars, and 200 Travancore soldiers under a young Frenchman, with some artillery, consisting of one 4-pounder and two 3-pounders. After two months of open trenches, the place was assaulted, and the assault repulsed with great slaughter. Relief came the same day, and reinforcements, which raised the garrison to 700 men, were thrown in; and instead of abandoning the place, satisfied with the rescue of its gallant band of defenders, the new garrison determined to hold on. The siege was recommenced by a large army; a second attempt to relieve it failed, and Lieutenant Chalmers, after a month of this second siege, was obliged to capitulate. He obtained the most honourable terms, in violation of which he and his brother officers were sent close prisoners to Seringapatam.

Tippoo's cruel treatment of his prisoners is constantly referred to in the histories, despatches, and letters of his time, and he appears to have been a man of untamable passions and great ferocity.

It may also be mentioned, although it does not appear in Lord Cornwallis's despatches as a cause either of the commencement or prolongation

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of the war, that after the outbreak of hostilities Tippoo had barbarously murdered several English youths, who had fallen into his hands and had been, in breach of treaty, detained by him, and subjected to the most unworthy treatment.

By the capture of the several fortresses, Lord Cornwallis established a frontier-line, to which his supplies could with ease be brought within fifty miles of the enemy's capital, so as to make the success of the next campaign assured, and tolerably easy; and he also provided an ample commissariat.[1] General Abercromby moved in the beginning of January, 1792, from Bombay with 8400 men, and Lord Cornwallis himself had now a force of 22,000 men, with a considerable train of field artillery and siege-guns. A large army of the Nizam's and a small corps of Mahrattas joined him, and with this combined force he marched, unopposed, to within six miles north of Seringapatam, where he encamped.

The defences of Seringapatam were very strong, and seemed formidable. Lord Cornwallis nevertheless determined to resort to the usual British mode of storming the lines, although they were held by Tippoo's whole army, and defended by 300 pieces of artillery. Without any previous siege operations, at sunset on the 6th of February, Lord Cornwallis gave his orders. At eight o'clock, by moonlight, the assaulting columns advanced. Lord Cornwallis, in

[1] It is indeed to be noted in all the English campaigns in India, that having money to pay and scrupulously paying for their supplies, they had seldom any substantial difficulty in procuring native merchants and carriers enough to keep the army and its camp followers fed.

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violation of all Indian notions of propriety and dignity, took himself the command of the centre and main column of attack. The bold suddenness of the attack was, as usual, successful, and by daybreak the whole of the lines and works on the north of Seringapatam were in the hands of the English, although the fight did not wholly cease until five in the evening, when a last attempt to dislodge them was made by Tippoo without success. The victory was achieved with a loss of 535 men, including thirty-six European officers. Tippoo's loss, including those who immediately deserted him, is said to have exceeded 23,000 men; and all the guns in the works taken fell into the hands of the victors.

The town and inner fortress had still to be taken, and the siege-works were immediately commenced, and vigorously prosecuted. By the 22nd the breaching batteries were so far advanced, that it was certain that they could be opened by the 1st of March within 500 yards of the wall. General Abercromby, with the Bombay contingent, had by this time come up. Tippoo now gave up all hopes of further resistance, and, after a consultation with all his principal officers, submitted to the hard terms imposed by the allies, or rather by Lord Cornwallis in their name. These terms were no less than the cession of half his dominions, and the payment of 3,600,000*l.* for the expenses of the war, to be paid by instalments; and the due fulfilment of the treaty, that is to say, the surrender of the ceded districts and the payment of the money, was secured by the delivery of two of Tippoo's sons as hostages. The division of the Mysore kingdom was made by revenue, not by popula-

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tion or extent; that being the business-like way in which territorial arrangements were usually made in India, where a district was described as a district of so many lacs a year. On the same principle the partition was made of the ceded districts into thirds between the English and their allies. The districts of Malabar, Salem, Dindigul, and others, fell to the English, who also became the sovereign superiors of the Rajah of Cochin, who had previously been a feudatory of Tippoo.

About 20,000 square miles were thus added to the British territory by the Treaty of Seringapatam and the subsequent arrangements; and the British, the Nizam, and the Peshwa eventually bound themselves jointly to defend their respective acquisitions by a treaty of defensive alliance against Tippoo.

Lord Cornwallis's military labours did not cease with this success. He had next to turn his attention to the French forts and settlements—Pondicherry, Chandernagore, and others,—which were, in the absence of all aid from France, easily and speedily reduced. The details of military incidents, full of interest as they are, are not merely by reason of that interest inserted in this story; but because they serve to illustrate very clearly one of the chief causes of the original conquest and continued subjection of a large, populous, civilized empire, not unused to war, by a mere handful of men. No native officer would ever have dreamt of defending a place like Coimbatore with such a force as Chalmers had; and yet the English officer did it with native followers against a large army. No native officer would ever have conceived it possible to take such fortresses as those of Savendroog

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and Ootradroog by escalade and assault; things which were attempted and executed by English officers as of course, and in the doing of which they always got their native soldiers to follow. The bulldog pertinacity and impetuous combativeness of the European are strangers to the soil and climate of India.

The war having thus been brought to a successful conclusion, Lord Cornwallis next turned his attention to a most important subject, the land tenure in Bengal. The "Permanent Settlement" of the revenue, which he effected in 1793, will cause his name to be remembered even when his renown as a general has been forgotten. Reforms had long been urgently needed. With the single exception that the territories under British rule were secure from the desolating incursions of invading armies and marauding bands, little or nothing had been done by the new rulers to promote the welfare of the people. Government, in the sense in which we now understand it, as an organized system of legislation and administration of justice, did not exist. The exactions and oppression of the government agents equalled, if they did not exceed, those of the chiefs whom they succeeded, and the power of the new administration rendered it less easy for the oppressed cultivators to avail themselves of the only remedy of such a population, tumultuous rising. The officials were not always honest or zealous, their knowledge and their numbers were alike inadequate, and they were forced to rely on corrupt native subordinates.

This state of things could not continue, and it was especially for the performance of the great work of reform that Lord Cornwallis was selected as Governor-

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General. He found the country divided into districts or Zemindaries, each under a zemindar or land-tax collector, paid by a percentage on the amount at which the government assessed his district. This office was one of great power and dignity, and constituted the only aristocracy which existed in the British dominions; but the only proprietary right to which the zemindars had any claim was the percentage of the Government rent or land-tax. Under the annual settlement zemindars who either refused to pay or were thought unworthy of being trusted with the management, were frequently dispossessed.

Lord Cornwallis felt rightly enough that the annual assessment was a fatal bar to all improvements, but the essentially illogical part of his scheme was that he made the assessment permanent as between the Government and the zemindars, to whom he granted proprietary rights which they had not hitherto had, and did not make it permanent as regards the ryots, the actual possessors and cultivators of the soil itself. He does not seem to have realized that the ryots were the hereditary freeholders of the soil, liable only to the Government assessment, and were not tenants under a private landowner, liable to be dispossessed or rack-rented at his pleasure. It is true that the freehold ownership of the ryot had from excessive exactions become of little value, and that the rate of assessment left him barely sufficient for the maintenance of his family and the expenses of cultivation; a state of things for which the obvious remedy would have been to limit the demand on the ryot, and fix it, if not in perpetuity, at least in permanence.

Lord Cornwallis appears to have thought that the

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prosperity of an agricultural district was to be ensured by imitating the model with which he was familiar in England:—large landowners applying themselves to the improvement of their estates, and surrounded by an industrious, thrifty, and well-to-do tenantry. He hoped that the zemindars would in time become such landlords and the ryots such tenants. Starting from the idea that the zemindars were to be made into Lords of Manors, it was arranged that a fixed moderate demand should be made on them by the Government, certain rights being granted to the ryots, who became in fact customary tenants of the Manor. The zemindar was to have all profit derived from the reclamation of waste lands, and the rents were to be fixed by the value of the produce of the land, and could only be raised by inducing the ryot to cultivate the more valuable articles of produce, and to clear the extensive tracts of waste land. This part of the scheme seems hardly credible; it is just as if it were now to be enacted for the first time, that in order to promote agricultural improvement in England, tithes should be payable by the tenant, in respect of improved cultivation or of the newly enclosed wastes of a manor.

The settlement was made, but its first working appears to have been disastrous. The assessment by incompetent and corrupt officials was anything but moderate; many zemindars were grievously overcharged and eventually ruined, although armed with oppressive powers of distress against the ryots. These evils though great were temporary; and the system of permanence of assessment was productive of future prosperity.

Concurrently with this measure Lord Cornwallis

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introduced a complete system of judicacy and a code of laws under the name of "Regulations." The country was divided into districts, over each of which was a judge with native assessors to advise in matters of Hindoo and Mohammedan law. From this judge there was an appeal to the Provincial Court, from that to the Supreme Court, and from that again to the Privy Council in England. For small matters there were courts of native judges; provision was also made for trying criminal offences; and an organized police was established.

It was provided that all the officers of Government should be amenable to the Courts for acts done in their official capacities, and "that Government itself, in cases in which it may be a party with its subjects in matters of property, shall submit its rights to be tried in the Courts under the existing laws and regulations," thus establishing the supremacy of the law and of the Courts of Law over all persons whatever, the foundation of all civil liberty, and embodying one of the most valuable of our English principles:—that every subject, however mean, has an absolute right without any preliminary authorization, to bring any functionary, however high, before the judges of the land for any wrong done.

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CHAPTER VI.

1793—1800. Sir John Shore. Lord Wellesley. Fourth Mysore War.

In September, 1793, Lord Cornwallis resigned the Government to Sir John Shore, and left India in the full assurance, that he had by the Treaty of Seringapatam established permanent peace throughout the south of India by a well-arranged balance of power. The British Government of Madras had no designs upon the territories either of the Mahrattas or the Nizam, and had no reason to anticipate any hostile proceeding on their side. The alliance between them for mutual defence against the ambition of Tippoo Sultan was so natural, and so obviously dictated by the commonest prudence and by a sense of their common interest, that it had every reasonable prospect of continuance. On the other side, Tippoo, although still formidable from the extent of his remaining dominion and his commanding central position in the highland plateau of Mysore, had, it was to be hoped, been so reduced by the last war, as to make him loth to enter into conflict with the united strength of the allies. It was hoped that the Nizam, the Peshwa, and the British would retain their possessions in peace and tranquillity, and that the apprehension of Tippoo's power and designs would have prevented the Nizam and the Peshwa from destroying one another.

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The expectations of peace, reasonably based on these considerations, were doomed in a very few years to be disappointed. Again we find a tropical rapidity of growth and of decay. The Treaty of Seringapatam was signed on the 18th of March, 1792, but by the year 1798 the following startling changes had been made in the state of Southern India. Madhoo Rao, who was Peshwa at the time of the treaty, had a very able minister, Nana Furnavese, by whose skill it was at one time feared, that such great weight might be thrown into the scale, as to enable the Government of Poonah to wield the whole united force of the colossal Mahratta empire; but on Madhoo Rao's death, Nana, following the usual practice of Indian Prime Ministers, attempted to disturb the regular course of succession by intruding an adopted child upon the throne. This led to a succession of intrigues and revolutions at Poonah, which ended in the establishment of Badjee Rao as the reigning Peshwa, though still for a time overshadowed by the power and influence of Nana. In the meantime the Nizam had been engaged in a contest with the Mahrattas, which resulted in a disastrous and disgraceful defeat of the former at the battle of Kurdla, by which the military power of the court of Hyderabad was reduced to the lowest point of degradation. The Nizam was compelled to sacrifice a large portion of his territory, to engage to pay a fine of three crores[1] of rupees, and to submit to the captivity of his minister, Azim-ul-Omra, who was carried a prisoner to Poonah. Azim, although a

[1] A crore is ten millions of rupees.

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prisoner, was able to take a distinguished part in the revolutions of Poonah in support of Nana, who, in return, agreed to relinquish all the concessions made by the Nizam by the Treaty of Kurdla. The Peshwa, to get rid of the overgrown power of his minister, Nana, called in the assistance of Scindiah, the Mahratta Rajah of Gwalior, by whose persuasion the Peshwa violated the engagements made with Azim-ul-Omra, and insisted upon, and obtained, a cession of one-fourth of the territory, and the payment of one-fourth of the fine stipulated by the Treaty of Kurdla.

In addition to these heavy losses of power and honour the internal resources of the Nizam's state were still suffering from the derangement occasioned by two serious rebellions, the contest with the Mahrattas, and the detention of the minister Azim-ul-Omra at Poonah. In order, as he hoped, to strengthen himself, the Nizam had formed an army of Sepoys, officered by Europeans. In 1798 these amounted to a body of not less than 14,000 men, under the command of a Frenchman, M. Perron. Besides field-pieces to each regiment, a park of 40 pieces of ordnance (chiefly brass), from 12 to 36-pounders, with a well-trained body of artillerymen, including a number of Europeans, was attached to Perron's forces, and a foundation was being laid of a body of cavalry to act with the corps of infantry. The chief officers of the corps were Frenchmen, and many of the privates had been Sepoys in the French army at Pondicherry. The whole corps was, in fact, an armed French party of great power, zeal, and activity, whose whole efforts naturally were to magnify

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the power, resources, and success of France, to depreciate those of England, and to excite the Indian princes against the latter. The entire ordnance of the Nizam had been entrusted to the French commander, whose corps constituted the only efficient part of the Nizam's army, and was paramount in the state, the Nizam's Government being wholly unable to control the overbearing spirit and formidable power of the French faction. M. Perron maintained a correspondence with a powerful faction at the Nizam's court, opposed to the minister, Azim-ul-Omra, which had been long connected with Tippoo Sultan; he was also in direct correspondence with his own countrymen in the service of Tippoo and of Scindiah; and French military adventurers were arriving continually at Hyderabad to officer and discipline his corps. Such an armed body became naturally a source of terror to the Hyderabad Government, which had so rashly created it. Azim-ul-Omra, the able minister, dreaded the growth of a force which he could no longer restrain within the bounds of moderation, and which had already threatened to subvert his power. Such a force could obviously at pleasure dictate the succession, which was likely at no distant time to come in question, and even destroy the throne itself. Such was the position of affairs at Hyderabad; and Scindiah, taking advantage of the weakness of the Nizam, was preparing to attack him.

The situation of the Peshwa's affairs was not more promising. He had called in Scindiah, and by his assistance had succeeded in overthrowing his minister, Nana, who was imprisoned. But Scindiah, having during the revolutions at Poonah alternately taken

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part with Nana and the Peshwa, at length and in fact overpowered both, and remained as real master in the territory of the Peshwa. The power and authority of the Peshwa as the head of the Mahrattas were thus superseded, under circumstances which menaced the abolition of his office, and the elevation of Scindiah to the real chieftainship of the Mahrattas.

Scindiah had in his service a considerable body of soldiers, disciplined and officered by Frenchmen. Scindiah was, moreover, the Mahratta power who had possession of Delhi and of the person of the great Mogul. Powerful, however, as he seemed, and formidable as he really was to the Nizam and to the Peshwa, there were elements of weakness in his seeming strength, which placed him almost at the mercy of the British in the north-east. In his aggressions upon the Nizam and the Peshwa he had left his government of Gwalior; and behind him was a spirit of faction and revolt in his own dominions. By the ungovernable excesses of his temper he had disgusted all the ancient friends and connexions of his family, and all his respectable adherents; the other great Mahratta powers disliked him, and feared his aggressions; he was surrounded by an army clamorous for pay, was destitute of pecuniary resource, and unsupported by any one respectable friend. His principal minister even had expressed to the British resident at Poonah his entire disapprobation of Scindiah's conduct, his wish for an accommodation with the Peshwa under British mediation, and his desire for the return of Scindiah to his own dominions. These too were at that time threatened

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from Afghanistan; Zemaun Shah, the head of the Mohammedans there, having openly expressed his intention to invade Hindostan, to restore the Mohammedan power in India, and wholly to expel the Mahrattas.

In the meanwhile Tippoo Sultan's kingdom had been enjoying a state of internal tranquillity nearly uninterrupted; while the allies of the British had been distracted and exhausted by faction, rebellion, revolution and war, he had been diligently and successfully employed in improving the discipline of his armies, and repairing his resources. The British Government at Madras had no money in their treasury; their credit was exhausted; they had no magazines or stores or depots; and they were even afraid, after the public exhibition of Tippoo's hostility, to concentrate their dispersed forces for the defence of the Carnatic and for watching the Malabar coast, lest they should give the alarm to Tippoo, and provoke an immediate attack from an enemy, "whose resources were more prompt than their own, and a great part of whose army was supposed to be in a state of field equipment."

At this time, too, the strength and resources of the British in Europe were strained almost to the utmost by their contest with revolutionary France. The latter had just sent the expedition under General Bonaparte to Egypt, with the intent, after taking possession of that country, thence to attack the British in India. The importance of their Indian possessions to the latter as a source of wealth and strength was then, as it has always been, strangely exaggerated by the French, who thought that by expelling their rivals from their Eastern dominions, they would inflict a deadly blow

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on them. Emissaries from the French Government and General found a ready ear at Seringapatam, where the most exaggerated statements of the prowess of the French arms and the strength of the French Republic met willing credence. Tippoo Sultan thought this a favourable opportunity to gratify his hostility against the English, and sent ambassadors to the French Governor-General of the Mauritius. There was so little secrecy observed as to this hostile movement, that the latter actually issued an official proclamation as follows:—

"This prince desires to form an offensive and defensive alliance with the French. He promises to furnish everything necessary. He declares that he has made every preparation to receive the succours which may be sent to him. In a word, he only waits the moment when the French shall come to his assistance to declare war against the English, whom he ardently desires to expel from India. As it is impossible for us to reduce the number of soldiers of the 107th and 108th regiments and of the regular guard, we invite the citizens who may be disposed to enter as volunteers to enrol themselves, and to serve under the banners of Tippoo. The prince desires to be assisted by the free citizens of colour; we therefore invite all who are willing to serve to enrol themselves."

Some troops were enrolled under this proclamation, with whom the ambassadors returned to Mangalore, a port of Tippoo's on the Malabar coast. It was also known that Tippoo had sent an embassy to Zemaun Shah to invite him to invade India, and had sent circulars to the native princes to join him in effecting the expulsion of the English. He had even

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sought to induce their allies, the Nizam and the Peshwa, to desert them and to join him in an alliance against them; it was more than suspected that he had an understanding with Scindiah; and he was in secret communication with the English dependant, the Nawab of Arcot.

This was the state in which Lord Mornington, afterwards Marquis of Wellesley, found India, when he arrived at Madras on the 26th of April, 1798. The situation was in the highest degree critical, but the news of Nelson's victory of the Nile in great degree removed the immediate apprehensions of danger. Lord Wellesley (as we shall hereafter call him, as his best known title) felt justly, that so flagrant an act of hostility on the part of Tippoo Sultan, in direct violation of his treaty engagements, could not be passed over with impunity. He determined to exact from him full reparation for the wrong done, and to take from him effectual security against its repetition. The terms, which he proposed to exact and was willing to be satisfied with, were the cession of the sea-board, so as to shut Tippoo off from those reinforcements from France, from which the greatest danger was apprehended; the possession of the passes; the dismissal of all Tippoo's French officers and soldiers; and a pecuniary indemnity for the expenses of the preparations which the English had been obliged to make. Lord Wellesley was in some degree at first hampered by the instructions of a very peaceful character, which he had received on leaving England, where the Home Government dreaded any extension of territory as an incumbrance, and were very loth to risk the financial embarrassments which were sure to

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be occasioned by fresh hostilities in the East; and it was almost in terms of deprecatory apology that he wrote to England. "My ideas are that on the one hand we ought never to use any high language towards Tippoo; nor ever attempt to deny him the smallest point of his just rights; so on the other where we have distinct proofs of his machinations against us, we ought to let him know that his treachery does not escape our observation, and to make him feel that he is within the reach of our vigilance."

The proclamation of the Governor of the Mauritius had in the meantime reached England, and on the 15th of October, 1798 (such were the delays in communicating in those days) Lord Wellesley received from England a despatch written in June, which by anticipation approved of the vigorous policy, which he had on his own responsibility meanwhile determined on.

It was not altogether an easy task to take the immediate and decisive measures which the crisis demanded. The forces at the disposal of the Governor-General were not large, and his treasury was anything but overflowing. Some idea of his financial difficulties may be gathered from one of his despatches, in which he is able to congratulate the Court of Directors that:—

"The zeal, alacrity and public spirit of the bankers and commercial agents at Madras, as well as of the most respectable of your civil servants there, enabled me within a few weeks to raise a large sum of money by loan for the public service. Previous to my departure from Bengal I had remitted twenty lacs[2] of

[2] A lac is 100,000.

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rupees in specie for this Presidency. I now sent for a further supply, and the extraordinary exertions of his Excellency the Vice-President in Council, assisted by the diligence and ability of Mr. Thomas Myers, the Accountant-General of Bengal, furnished me with an additional aid of twenty lacs, within so short a time, that the movement of the army was not delayed for an instant on account of a deficiency of treasure, and Lieutenant-General Harris was provided with a sufficient supply of specie to maintain his army in the field until the month of May."

It may now excite a smile to think of a grand British army of invasion with such a military chest; and that by the "extraordinary exertion" of the Government, and by the diligence and ability of the Accountant-General, so large a sum as "two hundred thousand pounds," had actually been raised in so short a time as to merit the grateful mention of it by the great Governor-General of the British Empire in India, supposed by the world to be the great unfailing source of England's wealth. Lord Wellesley did in truth take decisive measures as promptly as his necessary preparations and the nature of the Indian seasons permitted; and he took them with great vigour, and with rare skill and ability. He first by skilful negotiations made sure of the Nizam. He undertook to furnish him with an English contingent, to be maintained at his expense, on his agreeing to dismiss at once his French troops, and for ever to renounce all employment of European or American auxiliaries for the future. Acting on this arrangement with great promptitude, Lord Wellesley threw an English force into the Nizam's territory, to whom M. Perron and the French officers

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were obliged to surrender themselves on honourable terms, and the whole dangerous corps lately commanded by them was forthwith disbanded and disarmed. This was a great advantage gained; and the Nizam undertook to fulfil the terms of the old treaty of alliance, and to join in the demonstration, and, if necessary, the coercive measures against Tippoo. The Peshwa was also to some extent secured, and a promise of his co-operation was obtained. His conduct was vacillating, uncertain, and suspicious; but he was at all events neutralized, and Lord Wellesley was able to deal with Tippoo alone.

Having made all his arrangements, the Governor-General directed his army to enter Mysore, and to proceed directly to Seringapatam. He justified his conduct in a proclamation simple, frank, and explicit, addressed to all the princes and people of India, showing the provocations received from Tippoo, and the fruitless efforts made to induce him to make proper reparation and satisfaction. On the 5th of March, 1799, the army under General Harris, entered the enemy's territory. The "Grand Army," as it was called, consisted (exclusive of commissioned officers) of 912 European cavalry and 4608 European infantry; of 1766 Native cavalry, and 11,000 Native infantry; 576 artillerymen, and 2726 Gun Lascars and Pioneers. General Harris, after a successful engagement by the way, in which Colonel Wellesley (afterwards the Duke of Wellington) took a prominent part, succeeded in placing himself two miles south-west of Seringapatam by the 5th of April. An army from Bombay, which had entered the Mysore territories from that side under General Stuart, and had

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obtained a brilliant victory over Tippoo's forces, immediately on receipt of the news of General Harris's arrival before Seringapatam, advanced and effected a junction with the Grand Army under the walls of that place. Other detachments which had been left to guard the plains were called up in support; and the full strength of the combined English armies at the commencement of the siege operations was 8704 Europeans, 26,851 Natives (Sepoys), and 2351 horses.

With the English army were 23 engineers, 3621 infantry, and 6000 cavalry of the Nizam, who were probably of some, although not much, service, and at all events proved the reality of the alliance against Tippoo. They were useful too as a further proof that the war was not a war of British aggression and conquest, but a war of two allied Indian powers against a third, who had violated a general treaty of pacification and arrangement.

By the 24th of April the approaches to the fortifications were so far advanced as to give the English the command and the possession of the enemy's advanced works, which were carried, but not without an obstinate contest, which continued through the night. The breaching batteries were without loss of time erected, and their fire began to batter in a breach on the 30th of April. By the 3rd of May the walls were so much destroyed, that the breach was reported practicable. The troops were stationed in the trenches early on the morning of the 4th, where they remained quietly until the heat of day, when the assault was suddenly given; the defenders seem to have been taken by surprise by an assault at that time of day, and were little prepared to oppose it. The sovereign, the generals, and

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the army were indulging in their noon-day refreshment and repose. The assaulting force, consisting of four flank companies of Europeans, followed by four European regiments and three corps of grenadier sepoys, one from each Presidency, and 200 of the Nizam's troops, moved at one o'clock from the trenches, crossed the rocky bed of the Cauvery under a heavy fire, passed the glacis and ditch, ascended the breaches in the faussebraye and the rampart, and in a few minutes were in possession of the works. Resistance continued to be made from the palace of the sultan for some time, after all the firing from the works had ceased, but by half-past two the place was completely in the possession of the English. Thus fell a fortress, which from the strength of its natural position and the stupendous works by which it was surrounded, on which 6000 men had been employed for six years, might well have been deemed by its defenders impregnable.

It was soon rumoured that Tippoo himself had been killed, and after much difficulty late in the evening his body, pierced by shot, was found in one of the gates under a heap of slain, who had fallen around him. His corpse was the next day recognized by his family, and interred with the honours due to his rank, in the mausoleum of his fathers. Many of his principal chiefs had also fallen in the assault. The loss of the English army from the 4th of April to the 4th of May inclusive, was of Europeans killed, 101; wounded, 622; missing, 22; of Sepoys killed, 119; wounded, 420; missing, 100. It is obvious that the brunt of the fighting had fallen on the Europeans.

In the advance the most scrupulous care had been

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taken, in obedience to Lord Wellesley's express injunctions, to avoid as much as possible all injury to the cultivators; and after the assault, the most effectual measures were immediately adopted to stop the confusion at first unavoidable in a city carried by assault, and to protect the inhabitants and their property. In particular every attention was paid to the families of Tippoo Sultan and to those of his chieftains, who were protected from all injury and insult.

Treasure and property to a very large amount were found in the fortress and palace. The amount of coined money, jewels, and bullion which, by a memorandum made soon after the capture, was estimated at upwards of four million of star pagodas, (nearly a million and a half sterling), contrasts singularly with the poverty of the conquerors, and the extraordinary efforts by which less than half of that sum was with difficulty gathered from various quarters. All this property became at once the prize of the army.

The extent and nature of the Sultan's military preparations and resources were more strikingly shown by the 929 pieces of ordnance, half of them brass, 99,000 firelocks, carbines, &c., 22,000 musket barrels, and 424,600 lbs. of round iron shot, and 520,000 lbs. of gunpowder, which were taken possession of. Two hundred and eighty seven guns, mounted on the works, were found, as well as buildings and machines for boring and polishing guns and muskets, large arsenals, large magazines for powder, small expense magazines, armouries, foundries, and well-stored granaries — everything in short for the defence of the place. Tippoo's private papers also were discovered; and amongst them a copy of his letter to the Executive

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Directory of France, and a note of the proposals to be made by his ambassadors at Paris. The letter breathed a strong and not unnatural hostility to the English, and a request for such a reinforcement of troops as, joined to his own, would enable him to attack and annihilate for ever their common enemies in Asia. The proposals were for a force of ten or fifteen thousand French troops to be landed on the Coromandel coast, and included the restoration to Tippoo of all the provinces which in 1792 he had been compelled to cede to the British and their allies, and an equal division of all the other conquests which they should make, including the Portuguese settlements. The fall of Seringapatam and of Tippoo decided the campaign. All his sons in a few days came in and surrendered themselves to the English; the soldiers for the most part without further resistance disbanded; the forts were yielded up; and the country submitted with alacrity to their new masters, who were received with apparent cordiality.

Thus, in two months from the commencement of the campaign, the powerful kingdom of Mysore, that had been built up by Hyder Ali, and sustained with such determination and vigour by his son Tippoo, passed away like the baseless fabric of a vision. The ease with which it fell to pieces shows that it had no substantial basis to rest on. There was in truth no kingdom, no nation, no people of Mysore. It was the kingdom of Hyder, and after him became the kingdom of Tippoo; but of course the Hindoo people, the native chiefs and cultivators of the soil, could have had no love for the princes of the usurping Mohammedan dynasty or for the Mohammedan chiefs who held sway under them;

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nor does it appear that the princes had, either by their personal qualities or their administration, conciliated the affection of their subjects. The bearing and conduct of the Mohammedan generals and lords would seem to have been at least as oppressive and as offensive as that of the Norman barons to their Saxon subjects, aggravated by the fierce bigotry and haughty intolerance with which the stern monotheistic followers of the Prophet regarded the idolaters around them. It has been sometimes represented, that the fall of the Mysore kingdom was mainly due to the personal incapacity and misconduct of Tippoo, who is said to have been with difficulty on the day of the assault roused to a sense of his danger, or to any efforts to meet it. In a singularly interesting and able memorandum, however, on the position and power of Tippoo, prepared before the war by Captain (afterwards Sir John) Malcolm, for the guidance of Lord Wellesley, a very different and on the whole a very favourable estimate is given of his character and ability. It appears that his intrigues were conducted with great skill and perseverance, and showed very considerable powers of political combination, and knowledge of the assailable points in the English position, of the places in their alliances which were liable to be undermined, and of the means available for such assault and undermining. He was only misled into a premature betrayal of his designs by the promise of French assistance, in which he was grievously deceived, and disappointed. During the closing scenes of his life he was at all events with his army during the siege, and he fell at last in the assault by which his capital was taken.

The extraordinary enthusiasm, with which the news

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of the fall of Seringapatam was received throughout British India, was probably not surpassed by that which was sixteen years later excited in England by the battle of Waterloo, and showed unmistakably the sense of the great peril from which men's minds were suddenly relieved. Addresses of congratulation poured in upon Lord Wellesley; the wisdom of his policy, the completeness of his preparations, the energy of his measures, were in all men's mouths, and were re-echoed from this country. A perusal of all the despatches and documents shows that these praises were not ill-deserved nor exaggerated. The Governor-General appears carefully to have examined the position of the country, its enemies and allies, to have accurately weighed all the difficulties and dangers on the one hand, and the means of escape and resources on the other, and after due calculation and consideration to have come to the conclusion, that a policy of energetic action was the policy alike of safety and of honour, and to have acted with promptitude and vigour upon that conclusion. His policy gave immediately the tone to all the authorities, and to the body of the civil and military servants of the Company thoughout India. His self-reliance gave them confidence in him, and his confidence in them gave them self-reliance; but this confidence and self-reliance were wholly unmixed with rashness.

Nearly ninety years have elapsed, and the whole of the vast and populous domains which have formed the Presidency of Madras have ever since enjoyed the most profound peace. No more black clouds have hung on the hills, to burst with all the horrors of war on the Carnatic. No hostile foot has ever been set within

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the limits of that Government, nor has the sound of an enemy's gun disturbed the quiet of the people. The peace thus secured to their own subjects has been shared by their allies, who have been protected alike from foreign aggression and from the intestine feuds, by which for so many centuries the fair regions of India had been made one vast scene of bloodshed and devastation.

It is also satisfactory to observe in the whole of Lord Wellesley's conduct and language, throughout the events which preceded this crowning victory, the unfailing characteristic of straightforwardness. His language to all was alike simple and frank. There is not a trace of deception or duplicity to be detected by the most minute analysis; nor is there to be found in his conduct or in his language anything unworthy of an honest man or an English gentleman. There had been a great advance since the days of Clive and Hastings. In fine, there never was a war begun with more just cause, or on plainer necessity, or more unexceptionably conducted, or the prizes of which were more legitimately acquired. Tippoo, in a game of war challenged by himself, fairly lost all his dominions to his adversaries, and with the exception of his own family and a very few personal adherents and co-religionists, not a human being suffered any injury from the change of masters, or was even wounded in any feeling of patriotism or national self-love, or religion or caste. It is worthy of remark, that as the aggressions of the French on the Factory at Madras led to the first establishment of the English as a sovereign power there, and to their first territorial acquisitions, so the intervention and promises of the French led directly to the great

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results which followed from the capture of Seringapatam.

The Governor-General was in effect after this victory all-powerful in India. He proceeded to deal at his pleasure with the territories that had fallen into his power. He determined to restore the representative of the legitimate Hindoo sovereign whose throne had been usurped by Hyder, and assigned to him the kingdom of Mysore, which still exists under the arrangements which were then made, a kingdom of not less than 30,000 square miles. The terms of the treaty, by which this was effected, deserve detailed mention, as illustrating the nature of the alliances, which it was then and thenceforth the policy of the English to make with the native princes, who were willing to accept their protection. It was in substance as follows, viz:—

1. The friends and enemies of either shall be considered as the friends and enemies of both.

2. The Company shall maintain, and the Maharajah shall receive, a military force for the defence and security of His Highness's dominions, for which he shall pay the annual sum of seven lacs of star pagodas. The disposal of the money and the arrangement for the employment of the troops are to be left entirely to the Company.

3. In case of war or preparations for war, His Highness shall contribute such further sum for the increased expense, as on an attentive consideration of the means of His Highness, the Governor-General shall deem a reasonable and just proportion to his actual net revenues.

4. In case of apprehended failure of the stipulated

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payments of the contributions, the Governor-General shall have power to make such regulations as he shall think fit, or to bring under the direct management of the servants of the Company, such parts of the territories as shall appear to the Governor-General in Council necessary to render the funds available in peace or war.

5. The Maharajah will abstain from interference in the affairs of any state whatever, and will not hold any communication or correspondence with any foreign state whatever, without the previous knowledge and sanction of the Company.

6. The Maharajah will not take any European foreigners into his service, and will apprehend and deliver up all Europeans found in his territories without the passports of the Company.

7. The contingent is to be employed, if required, for enforcing and maintaining the authority and government of His Highness, but not in the ordinary transactions of revenue.

8. The Maharajah promises to pay at all times the utmost attention to such advice as the Company's Government shall occasionally judge it necessary to offer to him, with a view to the economy of his finances, &c., or any other objects connected with the advancement of His Highness's interests, the happiness of his people, and the mutual welfare of both states.

The terms are such as almost necessarily flow out of the relations of protecting and protected states, and the pecuniary tribute (about 250,000*l.*) rendered in exchange for military defence and protection, was certainly not immoderate.

The position of a native prince under such a treaty

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is pretty much what that of a feudal sovereign, duke, or count is to his suzerain paramount. So long as the paramount lord is strong enough to be dreaded, he is in effect for all military and imperial purposes, actual sovereign, and master of the resources of the dependent state. With the provision in the treaty that the superior should maintain "a military force," which of course practically means "the military force," within the territory for its protection and security, and the further provision authorizing direct interference with the management of the country in a special case, and interference by way of advice in every case, the native prince was in truth a mere vassal; and the reality of his subjection has been strikingly shown in Mysore itself, where the incapacity of the sovereign for many years made it necessary for the suzerain power to place him under tutelage, even in the internal administration of his people.

With regard to the remaining spoils of the war, they were divided between the English and the Nizam, after a vain attempt to bring the Peshwa into the same position of a subsidized and protected ally, by offering him the bribe of a considerable portion of the Mysore territory. After a short trial of the arrangement, under which the Nizam was to pay his tribute to the English, with a liability to further undefined payments in case of war, and the consequent provisions for securing the due and punctual payment, a fresh treaty was entered into, which provided for a perpetual alliance between the two powers, and a positive guarantee by the English of the rights and territories of the Nizam against any act of unprovoked hostility or aggression. It was stipulated that the

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English should provide eight battalions of Sepoys, (8000 firelocks), two regiments of Cavalry, with the requisite complement of Guns, European artillerymen, Lascars, Pioneers, warlike stores and ammunition, such force to be stationed in perpetuity in His Highness's territories.

For the regular payment of the whole expense of the subsidiary force, the Nizam ceded to the Company, in perpetuity, all the territories acquired by him under the Treaty of Seringapatam, as well as all those allotted to him in the recent partition of Tippoo Sultan's dominions; which territories were to be accepted by the English in full satisfaction of the pecuniary obligations of the Nizam.

The districts acquired by this treaty in absolute sovereignty by the English amounted to about 26,000 square miles; which, added to 20,000 acquired by the Treaty of Seringapatam, made an aggregate of 46,000 square miles of the territories of Tippoo Sultan, which passed under the direct rule of the English.

By these acquisitions and arrangements, the English became masters, either as sovereigns in possession or as lords paramount, of the whole of the southern part of the Peninsula.

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CHAPTER VII.

1801. Lord Wellesley. Acquisition of Tanjore, the Carnatic, and Oude.

In 1801 Lord Wellesley took steps to acquire in absolute possession, as immediate domains, the dependent territories of Tanjore and the Carnatic.

As far back as the year 1776, the Rajah of Tanjore had entered into an arrangement for placing himself under the protection of the Company, and receiving a subsidiary military force in exchange for an annual payment charged on the revenues of his country. He fell into arrears, and became deeply involved, which led to arrangements for the discharge as well of his debt to the Company as of his private debts. On his death in 1787 a dispute arose as to the right of succession, and Sir Archibald Campbell having decided in favour of Amer Sing, the latter was by the authority of the British placed on the Musnud. But Serfogee, the excluded claimant, did not acquiesce in this decision, and appealed for redress to the superior British authorities. After many years of delay and a very long investigation, a minute was made by Mr. Dundas, in which, after stating that the whole of the evidence proved that the son of the former Rajah had been unjustly and unduly deprived of his inheritance, and

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that it was impossible that the British Government should any longer co-operate in supporting the present usurper, he proceeded as follows:—

"... It must be recollected, that we are in a great degree the authors of this injustice. It was produced by our interference obtained through the misrepresentations of the person who is now reaping the benefit of it, and the rightful heir has a just claim that we should remedy that injustice which originated in our interference. If after such a lapse of time the native powers were to observe us interfering in order to carry into effect any forfeiture in our own favour, it would afford just cause of reproach, but in the present instance we would appear in the light of honourably repairing that injury which we ourselves have been the innocent instruments of committing.

"At the same time that we are interfering to do justice to the rightful heir, we ought not to forget the claims the country has to our protection against oppression, and we have a fair right to take care that the interests ascertained to us in the revenues of Tanjore be better guarded than they have been by former treaties." [1]

In June, 1798, Lord Wellesley issued his direction to the Government of Madras to proceed to the deposition of Amer Sing and the restoration of Serfogee; assuring the former that his person should be protected, and that his private property, together with a suitable provision for his maintenance, should be secured to him so long as he should conduct himself in all respects to the satisfaction of the Government of Fort St. George. It was stipulated with Serfogee that he

[1] Page 49, vol. v, Wellesley Despatches. Private Minute of Mr. Dundas, Sept. 11, 1797.

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should assent to the appointment of a commission to inquire into the state and resources of Tanjore, and that in the meantime the Company should retain the possession of the districts, which had been assumed in consequence of the failure of Amer Sing in the payment of his debts.

It had originally been intended to assume the management of the whole country for a short time, but Lord Wellesley subsequently wrote:—"My opinion has changed upon a further consideration. I think the assumption of the whole country, without the consent of Serfogee, even for so short a period as a year, might bear a very odious appearance in the eyes of the native powers. But if Serfogee should really be sensible of the advantages to be derived to his own interests, as well as to those of his people from entrusting the management of his country to the servants of the Company for one or two years, I think such a measure would be very beneficial to all parties. On this point, however, my desire is that the inclinations of Serfogee should dictate the arrangement, and that no other means than those of advice and persuasion should be used to induce him to propose such a measure. The proposal must come from himself in a formal manner, and must originate in his conviction of the utility of the arrangement to his permanent welfare."

This communication shows the spirit in which Lord Wellesley, in full accord with the authorities at home, dealt with the subject, and there is no reason to believe that he in any way departed from it in the ultimate arrangement which was prepared by himself, and left by him before leaving Madras in the form of

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a treaty, which was immediately proposed to Serfogee; nor does there seem any reason to believe that any pressure was put on the Rajah to induce him to accede to the treaty, which, by putting an end to the double government which had prevailed, was manifestly calculated to promote the prosperity of the people of Tanjore.

By that treaty, the Government of the country was vested in the Company, ample provision being made for the Rajah; the result of the inquiry having proved, that it had become indispensably necessary to establish a regular and permanent system for the better administration of the revenue of the country.

Thus the important province of Tanjore became British territory with the acquiescence of the Rajah who, munificently provided for, contentedly subsided from the position of a protected sovereign into that of a mediatized prince, to the great satisfaction of the creditors of the state, and to the incalculable advantage of the people. It is noteworthy that the registration of the titles of the landowners and the perpetual limitation of their land tax were primary articles of the treaty.

Turning now to the Carnatic, it will be recollected that the very origin of the territorial dominion of the Company in the Madras Presidency, was the contest as to the Nawabship of Arcot or the Carnatic, in which the French took one side and the English the other, and that the English candidate and faction ultimately prevailed. An alliance of the most intimate character came thus to arise between Mahomed Ali and the Company; and unfortunately for the prince, he became also intimately allied with Paul Benfield

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and a number of other English adventurers and intriguers, including or having as accomplices many of the Company's highest officials. He was himself an intriguer of no despicable powers, but wholly unable to cope with the many accomplished masters of the arts of intrigue by whom he was surrounded, and in whose toils he was entangled. His affairs became frightfully embarrassed, and large districts of his dominions were ruined by his mortgage creditors, to whom they were assigned. In India the assignment of land revenue of a district, carries with it the administration of the district, and the state of a country may well be conceived when under the rule of an usurious money-lender, with no object but to exact the largest amount for the satisfaction of his claims, and with no interest in the permanent welfare of the districts.

The Carnatic had been overrun and devastated by the armies of Hyder Ali, from whose power it was only rescued by the exertions of the British; and in 1787 the Company bound itself to maintain the whole military force required for the protection of the territories of the Nawab, who in return charged himself with an annual subsidy of fifteen lacs of pagodas, and it was arranged that in the event of actual war, the Company should, if deemed necessary, take the whole administration of the country into its hands.

When the great war with Tippoo Sultan took place in 1790, it was found necessary to act upon that engagement in the treaty; but after the successful termination of that arduous struggle by the Treaty of Seringapatam, the civil government was restored to

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the Nawab Mahomed Ali, whose territories were guaranteed by the terms of the general peace. He represented that the pecuniary obligations of the treaty of 1787 were too burthensome for his resources; and it was therefore arranged by a new treaty, in 1792, that the subsidy should be reduced from fifteen to nine lacs of star pagodas. This second treaty contained a renewal of the right of the Company, in the event of actual hostilities, to take the entire administration of the country into their hands; and was made not only with Mahomed Ali, but also with his son Omdah-ul-Omra, to whom the succession to his father's territories was thereby secured and guaranteed.

The pecuniary embarrassments of the Arcot princes became so great, that without being able to make any provision for the payment of his debts, the Nawab was only able to meet the monthly payments of the subsidy of nine lacs of pagodas, as they became due, by contracting fresh debts at exorbitant rates of interest; the loans being usually accompanied by assignments of territory to the creditors, "whose vexatious management of the revenues assigned has been" (writes Lord Wellesley) "the continual cause of the most aggravated calamities to the inhabitants of the Carnatic."

This state of affairs became a source of great anxiety and much pain to the Government both in India and at home; anxiety from the apprehension, amounting almost to a certainty, that at no distant time the impoverished country would fail to yield the subsidy which then constituted a great part of the revenues of the Madras Government; and pain from the uneasy conviction, that their power alone maintained a rule by

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which the country was impoverished and depopulated.

In Lord Wellesley's Despatches we have evidence beyond dispute of not only the justice and moderation, but even the liberality with which the former was minded to deal with the Nawab. In a letter to the Governor of Madras he writes:—"My fixed rule was to treat him with the respect due to his rank, with the kindness due to the ancient friendship between his family and the Company, and with the delicacy demanded by his dependent situation."

When the war of 1799 broke out, Lord Wellesley took that opportunity of again addressing a letter to this prince, pointing out to him that the Company were then authorized by the very terms of the treaty to take into their own hands the whole administration of his country, and exposing in very plain but very respectful terms, the ruinous consequences to himself and his country of the existing state of things, and the injurious consequences which must result to the Company. After reminding him of the liberality which had been shown in 1792, and of the position of his affairs as debtor to the Company, Lord Wellesley proposed to him an arrangement, the substance of which was:—

That a territory should be placed under the exclusive management and authority of the Company, yielding a revenue equal to the monthly payments due to the Company, which should thenceforth cease. If such territory should produce more than the amounts, the whole of the surplus to be paid to the Nawab, but if less, the loss to be borne exclusively by the Company. All the unassigned territories to be under the abso-

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lute control of the Nawab, free from any control or interference of the Company—whether in peace or war—and from all claims by them.

To these very liberal proposals, which would have relieved the country from the evils of a double government and the rapacity of the creditors, and would have relieved the prince from all his difficulties and given him a much more ample revenue, he always offered one answer.

Non possumus. "My father's dying injunctions to me were never to allow the slightest deviation from the treaty of 1792, and I am bound, therefore, by the most sacred obligation to him, not to allow a letter of it to be changed. Exercise all your rights under the treaty during this war, and I will submit; I rely on British justice when the war is ended to replace me in full possession of all my rights, in strict accordance with the same treaty." So there the matter then rested.

During the war with Tippoo Sultan, however, the conduct of the Nawab was such as in Lord Clive's[2] judgment could only be accounted for by his having a secret understanding with the enemy. He had engaged to pay a part of the subsidy at a time when it was of the utmost importance to raise funds for General Harris's expedition; and his failure to fulfil this engagement would have probably frustrated the whole operation, but for the timely arrival of the supply of specie from Bengal before mentioned. His agents and officers throughout his territory systematically and actively opposed every obstacle to the collection of the requisite supplies, and threw every difficulty in the way of the movements of the allied

[2] Governor of Madras.

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troops. The suspicions of his treachery arising from this otherwise inexplicable conduct, were amply justified by the documents which were found amongst Tippoo Sultan's private papers after the taking of Seringapatam.

After a careful examination of the documents, the Governor-General came to the conclusion that both Mahomed Ali and Omdah-ul-Omra the Heir Apparent, had been long in secret intercourse with Tippoo Sultan, "founded on principles, and directed to objects utterly subversive of the alliance between the Nawab and the Company, and equally incompatible with the security of the British power in the Peninsula of India;" and that "these ancient allies of the Company had been found not only deficient in every active duty of the alliance, but unfaithful to its fundamental principles, and untrue to its vital spirit." It is impossible, after reading the very careful and elaborate report of Mr. Edmonstone, the Persian translator, on the various documents found in the palace of Seringapatam, to avoid coming to the same conclusion. It was not unnatural that the Arcot princes should be dissatisfied with their dependent situation and the state of their affairs, and should conceive hopes of improvement from an alliance with the Company's great enemy; and there seems to have been another motive not less natural, and one not wholly blameable, for their conduct. The older Nawab especially, being in very advanced years, appears to have been moved by considerations of what he conceived to be his duty to the sacred cause of Islamism. Tippoo Sultan was considered as the great pillar of the faith in India; and it was therefore

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very natural that Mahomed Ali, on the verge of life, should admit the force of one of Tippoo's appeals to him :—"My hope from Almighty God, and my confidence in the Prophet is, that according to the command of God and of the Prophet, which is well known to all Mussulmans, all the faithful will exert themselves with heart and soul in maintaining and rendering permanent the religion of Mahomed. Upon your Highness, who is one of the heads of the faith, this is an absolute duty, and I am confident that your Highness will by all means constantly employ your time in performing what is obligatory on you."

Both Mahomed Ali and Omdah-ul-Omra appear indeed from the whole correspondence to have been influenced by a strong feeling of sympathy with their brother Mussulman in his contest with the infidel Government of the Company. However this may be considered morally as a palliation of their breach of faith, it could of course have no effect politically or legally in mitigation of the penalty, which was incurred by the plain violation of the treaty of alliance in its most essential terms.

Lord Wellesley therefore came to the determination that it was not only his right but his duty to proceed to the public deposition of the Nawab and the forfeiture of his sovereignty, and issued his directions to the Government of Madras accordingly. But before this could be carried into effect, the Nawab Omdah-ul-Omra was ascertained to be in a dying state, so that Lord Wellesley's determination and decision could not with proper regard to humanity be communicated to him, and he died in ignorance of what had been decreed against him. It was not, how-

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ever, Lord Wellesley's intention to do otherwise than make ample provision for the Nawab suitable to his princely rank and dignity. That the Governor-General was fully justified on every ground in availing himself of the right given by the violation of the treaty to make new arrangements for the government of the Carnatic, and that it was his duty to make them such as would best secure the good government of the country and the legitimate interests of the British rule, is not open to controversy; but the manner in which he effected his object after the death of the Nawab does not appear consistent with the dignity of himself or of the Government. The right of the Nawab was wholly forfeited, and it was for the Government to give or to withhold according to its sense of right and justice, tempered by all the considerations due to the position of their former ally, and the long continuance of the relations which had existed between him and the Company; but instead of acting upon this right he proceeded in a manner, which looks too much like the ordinary course of a native Indian Court.

The Nawab died without legitimate issue, and disposed of his throne and possessions by will to his reputed and acknowledged son, Hussein Ali. It had long been expected that such a disposition would be made, and it was also known that the validity of such disposition and the fact of Hussein being the son of Omdah-ul-Omra would be questioned by Azim-ul-Doulah, the son and heir of the next brother of the deceased Nawab, and the immediate great-grandson by both his parents of the Nawab Anwar-u-deen, the founder of the family. It is difficult to imagine any principle of general Mohammedan law, by which a

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Mohammedan sovereign would be authorized by will to dispose of his dominions to any person whom he chose to recognize as his natural son, or that there was any such family law recognized in the Arcot royal family. Without, however, pausing to consider to whom, by the proper laws and customs applicable to the case, the possession of the Musnud belonged, it was determined at once to acknowledge Hussein Ali, if he would engage to enter into a treaty, based on the decision of the Governor-General as to the future of the country. By whatever motive impelled, Hussein Ali, with the full concurrence of his testamentary guardians, his family and friends, and after two private interviews with Lord Clive, the Governor of Madras, resolutely declined to enter into any such arrangement. Thereupon Azim-ul-Doulah, on agreeing to make the required concession, was brought forward as the legitimate successor, and installed on the Musnud by the Company's authority. By a formal treaty he immediately ceded the whole of the Carnatic dominions, in absolute sovereignty and in perpetuity, to the Company, who engaged in return to pay him one-fifth of the net revenue of the country, but never less than 12,000 star pagodas a month; and it was further stipulated, that he should in all places, on all occasions, and at all times, be treated with the respect and attention due to His Highness's rank and position as an ally of the British Government, and be furnished with a suitable guard for the protection of his person and palace.

The provisions of the treaty were under all the circumstances liberal enough; but there should have been no treaty at all. The Governor-General should have

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determined, on a full and impartial examination of the case with the best advice of Pundits and others, who was the rightful successor to the family dignity and estates, and have declared on that plain ground of right in favour of the person so ascertained, and should then have made for him the provision which was deemed adequate; but it was unworthy of the British name to offer to sell the succession to whichever claimant would give them their price. The whole proceedings of the British authorities, however, including even the bargaining with Hussein Ali, his refusal, and their subsequent bargain with Azim-ul-Doulah, were frankly stated in a public proclamation by which they submitted their conduct to the public opinion and judgment of the princes and people of India.

Thus ended the Nawabship of the Carnatic; its connexion with the Madras Government had throughout been discreditable to the English, and a continual source of fraud, peculation, and maladministration by officials and others under official protection; and its very termination, as if by some fatality attending it throughout, took place in a manner neither rightful, just, nor becoming. By the acquisition of the territories of the Carnatic and Tanjore, in addition to those which were obtained in the final arrangement of Tippoo Sultan's kingdom, the Presidency of Madras grew from its comparatively small dimensions into the magnificent province which it now is of 148,000 square miles, and a population of at least 35,000,000 of people.

The position of affairs in the territories of the Nawab Vizier of Oude, was, if anything, still worse than in the Carnatic. Asaph-ud-Doulah, Warren Hastings' ally, died in the year 1797, and upon his death there occurred

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the usual Indian dispute as to succession. One Vizier Ali, claiming to be the son of the late Nawab, got together a sufficient party to enable him to seize the Musnud. Sir John Shore, the Governor-General, being satisfied that Vizier Ali had in truth no legitimate pretension to the succession, interfered on behalf of Saadat Ali, whom he ascertained to be the rightful heir, and whom he placed on the throne. By a treaty made with Saadat Ali, arrangements were entered into for the maintenance of a large British subsidiary force to be stationed in Oude. The British Government undertook to defend Oude and the new Vizier against all enemies, and it was especially stipulated that if circumstances should arise calling for a larger force, the British should furnish it, and the Vizier should defray the additional expenses thereby occasioned.

The government of Saadat Ali was very bad, and the most earnest remonstrances were addressed to him by the British Resident and the Governor-General personally, but in vain. Under British protection Oude had been maintained in the uninterrupted enjoyment of peace from without, but was rapidly and progressively declining in prosperity, population, and cultivation. There was a turbulent and mutinous army and universal discontent; and active and general support was given by Saadat Ali's subjects to an impostor who assumed the name of Vizier Ali. Saadat Ali owed even his personal safety to the British, made frequent complaints of the state of his country to the Governor-General, requested his interference and assistance, and at length announced his deliberate determination to abdicate, on the ground, "that his mind was utterly withdrawn from the government of a people

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who were neither pleased with him nor he with them, and with whose evil dispositions, enmity, disobedience, and negligence he was completely disgusted."

Amongst the dangers which then threatened India, one, not the least, was the invasion of Zemaun Shah, whose avowed object was to restore in his own person the Mogul sovereignty, and amongst other pretensions in that character he had called upon the Vizier of Oude and the British as his vassals to assist him. He had reached Lahore, and the intervening Sikh chiefs and Mahrattas were hardly in a condition to offer effectual opposition to his advance. The military situation in Oude was therefore one of great anxiety, and it became necessary to take effectual steps for strengthening the British force on that frontier. Lord Wellesley determined under the provisions of the treaty to increase the subsidiary army in Oude, and called upon the Vizier to defray the expense, and to reduce and radically reform his own army, which not only exhausted the pecuniary resources of the country, but was a source of weakness and danger in a military point of view to the protecting power. As long as a turbulent and licentious native army existed in Oude, it would be always necessary to keep a large British force there to overawe them, and all military movements would be hampered if the British were liable to have their communications cut off by a disaffected body left behind. It was therefore the right and the duty of the protecting power to insist on the reduction of the native army, and the substitution for them of a sufficient and efficient British force; but this was distasteful to the Vizier, and the Governor-General came to the conclusion, that the proposal to abdicate was a mere

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ruse by which the Resident and he himself were amused, so as to delay the military reforms so essential and so pressing. The Resident reported that "the Vizier instead of affording any cordial assistance for devising and carrying into execution a plan for the dismissal of the Oude battalions, had thrown every possible impediment in the way of that measure, and that he was equally desirous of impeding the progress of the additional British troops, by exposing them to difficulties in obtaining supplies of provisions." Thereupon Lord Wellesley wrote, "It is impossible for me to express in terms of sufficient force, the sentiments which this intelligence has occasioned in my mind. The conduct of your Excellency in both instances stated, but more flagrantly in the last, is of a nature so unequivocally hostile, and may prove so injurious to every interest, both of your Excellency and of the Company, that your perseverance in so dangerous a course, will leave me no other alternative than that of considering all amicable engagements between the Company and yourself to be dissolved, and of regulating my subsequent proceedings accordingly.

"I think it necessary to entreat you not to delay for a moment, whatever further steps may be pointed out to you by the Resident as necessary to effect the two urgent and indispensable objects; namely, the reform of your military establishment, and the provision of funds for the regular monthly payment of all the Company's troops in Oude. The least omission or procrastination, in either of these important points, must lead to the most serious mischief."

This remonstrance appears for a time to have produced some effect, but after the lapse of a year, the

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Vizier intimated that he should be probably unable to provide the necessary funds for the regular payment of the additional troops, furnished for the defence of his dominions. This in Lord Wellesley's judgment called upon him to take prompt measures for remedy ing the state of things in Oude. As those measures resulted in a considerable cession of territory by the Vizier, under a compulsory alteration of the existing treaty, it is necessary to state the grounds on which Lord Wellesley justified his somewhat high-handed proceeding, in his own language, in a letter addressed to the Nawab Vizier, from which the following are extracts.[3]

"It appears by your Excellency's statements . . . that the general resources of your dominions actually decline with a rapidity menacing the joint interests of your Excellency and of the Company in Oude with utter and speedy destruction. . . . It is evident that all my precautions must prove fruitless if the defects of the civil administration of Oude should be suffered progressively to impair the fundamental resources of the state. The continuance of the present system for a longer period will not only render your Excellency unable to discharge the subsidy on account of the additional troops; but the resources of your Excellency's country would be exhausted to such a degree as to preclude the possibility of your discharging the former subsidy. . . .

" While the Company's territories have been advancing progressively during the last ten years in prosperity, population, and opulence; your Excellency's dominions, have rapidly and progressively declined. . . . The daily

[3] See p. 429, vol. ii., Wellesley's Despatches.

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increase of these evils is evident to the whole world, acknowledged by yourself, and must be progressive to the utter ruin of the resources of Oude, unless the vicious system of government be immediately abandoned. . . . You have repeatedly and earnestly solicited my direct interference, and have declared it to be indispensably necessary for the purpose of effecting a complete reform in your affairs. . . .

"Having maturely considered the condition of Oude with the deliberation due to the importance of the subject, I am satisfied that no effectual security can be taken against the ruin of the country until your Excellency shall transfer to the exclusive management of the Company the civil and military government of your dominions, under such conditions as may secure the affluence and power of yourself and your illustrious family. . . . Under the Company's management your subjects would enjoy the rights of property, honest and vigorous administration of justice, and security of life. . . .

"If your Excellency should be persuaded to reject these proposals, I must inform you that the funds for the payment of the subsidy must be placed beyond the hazard of failure, and I must represent to your Excellency the necessity of making a cession to the Company of such parts of your territories as shall be adequate to defray these charges."

Under the compulsion of this menacing despatch a new treaty was concluded, by which were ceded to the Company, in perpetual sovereignty, territorial possessions, the estimated land revenue of which was thirteen millions and a half of Lucknow sicca rupees, in lieu of the subsidy and of all the expenses of any

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additional troops; the Company engaging to defend the Nawab Vizier's remaining territories against all foreign and domestic enemies. By the same treaty it was stipulated that the Vizier should maintain only the limited armed force therein specified, and an engagement was made which half a century afterwards led to most momentous results, viz.: "His Excellency engages that he will establish in his reserved dominions such a system of administration, to be carried into effect by his own officers, as shall be conducive to the prosperity of his subjects, and be calculated to secure the lives and property of the inhabitants; and his Excellency will always advise with, and act in conformity to, the counsel of the officers of the said Company."

The territory ceded to the Company by this treaty was about 30,000 square miles, being rather more than half the then dominions of Oude, and comprehended the whole of the Lower Doab between the Ganges and the Jumna, Allahabad, and a large extent of country on the Ganges and Gogra rivers down to the frontiers of Benares.

The country left to the Vizier was still a considerable kingdom; in situation, fertility, and resources unsurpassed probably by any part of India, and protected from foreign foes and intestine war, it required nothing but ordinary good government to be a flourishing and prosperous realm.

On a dispassionate consideration at this distance of time, the important judgment of the historian must be, that the Governor-General was not actuated by any vulgar ambition of territorial aggrandizement, but acted fairly and honestly, with due regard to the faith of existing treaties, and to what was due to the people

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as well as to the Sovereign of Oude. If he erred at all, it was in his duty to the people of Oude, in leaving so fair and so populous a kingdom still under the power of a prince so incapable and so unworthy, and continuing still to that prince's misrule the protection of the British power. But there was no abler or better prince at hand who could give hope of a better rule ; and Lord Wellesley, by inserting in the treaty the positive stipulations for the disbanding of almost the whole of the disorderly battalions, and for a better administration of the civil Government, might reasonably have hoped for the removal of most of the evils by which the country had been desolated.

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CHAPTER VIII.

1802—1803. Lord Wellesley. Mahratta Wars.

Lord Wellesley, besides enlarging the dominions of the Company, and extending their influence by the treaties with the Nizam, the Rajah of Mysore, and the Princes of Tanjore, the Carnatic, and of Oude, carried his military and diplomatic policy beyond the sphere of India. In order to aid in the expulsion of the French from Egypt, where they were a menace and danger to the British power in India, he was able to furnish the British armies in Egypt with a very respectable contingent, under Sir David Baird. He was also able to excite disturbances in the rear of Zemaun Shah, so as to distract him from the invasion of India, which he had threatened and commenced; and he succeeded in obtaining from the Persian monarch a defensive alliance against the Afghan Sultan. The Persian Government undertook, in case Zemaun renewed his attacks on India, that the Persian army should invade the Afghan dominions, and that no peace should be concluded which did not include a stipulation for the abandoning all design of attack on the British territories; in return the British bound themselves, in case of attack on Persia by the Afghans or the French, to furnish military aid, and particularly

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cannon, warlike stores, necessaries, and provisions. Zemaun Shah, who had penetrated as far as Lahore, was compelled by the disturbances at home to retreat, and never ventured to renew his attempts against India.

Lord Wellesley's policy, up to this point, had not only been eminently successful in rescuing the dominions confided to him from the perils which he found them exposed to, but met with almost universal approval in India and in England. We find him next engaged in the prosecution of schemes still more vast, in which, as will in the sequel be seen, he was also no less successful, but as to the propriety and prudence of which there was great controversy. His policy was ably criticized by Lord Castlereagh, though with no unfriendly hand, and was as ably defended by the fraternal zeal of Sir Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington), who himself had a great part in securing its success.

From the time of Lord Wellesley's acceptance of the office of Governor-General, he appears to have had what the French call, "des idées fixes," on two subjects, one, the necessity of obtaining a footing in the Mahratta empire, the other, the necessity of excluding Frenchmen from the armies and councils of the native princes, and shutting up every avenue through which French forces could find their way into India. The possession or absolute control of the whole sea coast was involved in the latter object.

The Mahratta empire was of vast extent, as large in proportion to India as the whole of the old German empire was to Europe. Lord Wellesley appeared to have regarded the Mahrattas with much the same apprehension as French statesmen regarded the

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power of Charles V., when Emperor of Germany and King of Spain. It was by no means an improbable contingency, that an able and ambitious Mahratta potentate might be able to weld the whole of that mass of states into one empire, or to obtain such a complete ascendency, as to be able to wield the whole military resources of that which was in theory, and to some extent in practice, a confederation. Lord Wellesley looked with great misgiving at the probability of a French and Mahratta alliance. There were several French adventurers of military skill in the service of more than one of the Mahratta chiefs, employed in training and disciplining their troops. The raw material with which the French officers had to deal, was at least as good as that out of which the Bengal Sepoys had been made what they were. The number of European troops on which the Anglo-Indian Government could count was very small; and the English power of reinforcing them very limited. If the French could succeed in introducing anywhere into India a powerful army, with artillery and stores, and could form a cordial alliance with a Mahratta Emperor, the whole conditions under which the great combat between Clive and his French rivals had been fought, would be changed. Under such circumstances and conditions, the expulsion of the English from India would be much more probable than the destruction of the French power would have seemed at the commencement of the former struggle.

Treaties with the Mahratta powers, by which they could be induced to admit English subsidiary forces, and to submit their disputes with the Nizam and with one another to English arbitrement, were therefore from

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the first the favourite scheme of Lord Wellesley's Indian policy. The conception was his, the execution was his, and he succeeded in it beyond his utmost expectations, not only without aid or countenance from home, but in defiance of the known ill-will of the Court of Directors, who loved neither his ambitious policy nor the somewhat haughty and overbearing independence of his administration. He thought it right in his despatches to tell them what he had done, and why he had done it, but does not seem otherwise to have taken much heed of their counsels or suggestions.

In prosecution of his scheme he had introduced into his treaties with the Nizam, stipulations for admitting the Peshwa into a participation in the spoils of conquest on certain conditions. The Peshwa, under the advice or rather under the control of Saadat, who was all powerful at Poonah, resolutely refused the English offers, but "Heaven soon granted what the Peshwa had denied."

In the first place, the Guicowar, one of the Mahratta powers whose dominions it will be recollected lie above Bombay, being attacked by another chief called Mulhar Rao, and unable to defend himself, applied for assistance to the Bombay Government, and received it, on the usual condition of admitting a subsidized English force into his territories, and on the cession of some territory in Surat, but the importance of this event was soon lost sight of in the course of the more striking and momentous events which shortly afterwards happened.

In order to have a clear conception of the entangled web which Lord Wellesley had to unravel, it is necessary always to bear in mind that there was no such

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thing in India, except perhaps under the vigorous rule of Hyder and of Tippoo, as a sovereign in the European signification of the term. The state of society was an exaggeration, almost to caricature, of the worst times of the feudal chaos in Europe. Every little lord was absolute despot in his own territory. There was no administration of justice as between him and his subjects, or as between him and his neighbours. There was not in public law or in public opinion, any recognition of a sovereign as the fountain and dispenser of justice. There was, however, an understanding that the lord owed tribute and military allegiance to some one or other, and a Rajah or Nawab grew or diminished in power, according to the number of the subordinate chiefs, who, for the time being, were coerced to acknowledge his right to the tributes from their territories. Every person, however, who obtained a country by the sword, sought to give a colour of legality to his possessions by a title from the Great Mogul, as in Europe under like circumstances, titles were eagerly taken from the emperor. The titles Nawab, Vizier, Nizam, speak for themselves, they all mean lieutenant or minister; the Company themselves were Dewans or Stewards; even the Mahrattas followed the same habit. The Peshwa, who was, as we have seen, hereditary Prime Minister, and, therefore, Viceroy over his Sovereign, was also Vaquel-ul-Mutuluck, Regent or Viceroy of the Great Mogul.

The family of Scindiah, originally an officer in the Peshwa's army, had come to establish themselves as permanent rulers under the Peshwa, and Doulat Rao Scindiah, the Scindiah of our narrative, was deputy to the Peshwa in his office of Vaquel-ul-Mutuluck.

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But this chain of delegation did not rest there; under Scindiah again was M. Perron, a Frenchman, who had succeeded to the command of a very large force of regular infantry, disciplined by European officers after the manner of the Sepoys of the British. M. Perron in nominal subordination to Scindiah, and nominally for the purpose of paying the latter's troops under his command, had established himself really in absolute sovereignty over a vast dominion, extending towards the left bank of the Indus through the Punjaub, and comprehending a large portion of the Doab, between the Jumna and the Ganges, including Agra and Delhi. It has been estimated that the annual revenues of M. Perron's dominions were not less than 1,700,000*l*, sterling. As the general of Scindiah, M. Perron had not only Delhi in his guard, but also possession of the person of the unfortunate Shah Alam, who was kept in the most abject subjection, and whose name and nominal authority M. Perron used whenever, and in whatever manner, it suited his purposes. M. Perron affected to call his army the Imperial army, and himself, the servant of the Great Emperor; the latter, however, was not only deprived of all power, but seems not even to have been treated with any of the outward respect ordinarily paid to the possessors of imperial name and title.

Scindiah's virtual possession of the power of the Peshwa's office was not submitted to willingly by the Peshwa himself, nor by the great Mahratta chief, the Rajah of Berar, who asserted a better right to the office of Peshwa, by virtue of his descent from the founder of the Mahratta Empire. In the Peshwa's own family, there was a brother Amrut Rao, with considerable in-

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fluence, ready to usurp his place; and in the Rajah of Berar's territory again there were several subordinate rajahs or chiefs, who were very restive under his yoke. It will be recollected that there was, as there still is, the considerable Mahratta principality of Holkar on the Nerbudda to the north-east of Bombay. On the death of Tuckojee Holkar, which had occurred some time before the events we have to narrate, his son, Cashee Rao, was acknowledged as successor by Scindiah; but there was another claimant, one Khundah Rao Holkar, who had been seized by Scindiah, and kept in confinement by him.

To add to the ingredients of mischief in this cauldron, there were throughout the Mahratta states, Pindarees, who were then the freebooters which the Mahrattas had been; like the Black Bands or Companions in European History, sometimes soldiers, at all times robbers, sometimes acting as independent plunderers, and at other times ranged as mercenaries under the banner of some great prince or chief. Something of the same kind, and bound together by the tie of a mystic religious fraternity, were the Sikhs, who swarmed in the territories upon the Sutlej, and thence over the Punjaub, and had already in great degree passed from the condition of freebooters into that of permanent masters of the districts overrun by them.

This being the state of things, there appeared on the scene a very active and energetic adventurer, Jeswunt Rao Holkar, a natural son of Tuckojee Holkar, who raised his standard, and soon gathered together a very formidable host, with which he sought to establish himself under some name or title as the real possessor of the power of the Peshwa. With this army he defeated

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the forces sent against him by the Peshwa, and he subsequently defeated in a decisive battle the combined armies of the Peshwa and Scindiah, who attempted in vain to intercept his march on Poonah, which capital he took and occupied. The Peshwa fled for protection into the British territory, and asked for British aid. He was only too glad now to comply with all Lord Wellesley's conditions, and a treaty known as "the Treaty of Bassein" was made between the Peshwa and the Government of Bombay on the 31st of December, 1802, by which in consideration of a British force and the British guarantee of his dominions, very considerable territories were ceded to the British, and some old claims of the Peshwa's upon some territories already in their possession were given up. The Peshwa further stipulated to discharge all Europeans of any nation at war with England; to abstain from any attack on the British or any of their allies, or any of the principal branches of the Mahratta Empire or any power whatever; and to submit all disputes between himself and the Nizam and any other power to the arbitrement of the British. The treaty formally ratified the treaty which had been made with the Guicowar, and contained the stereotyped clause that the Peshwa "should not enter into any negotiations with any other power, without previous consultation with the Company's Government, and that the Company should have no manner of concern with any of his children, relations, subjects or servants, as to whom he was absolute."

No time was lost on the part of the English in performing their part of the treaty. In the Nizam's territory, in the Presidency of Madras, and in that of Bombay, armies were put on foot ready for action.

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The first military operations were under Major-General Wellesley (the Duke of Wellington), who commenced his march on the 9th of March, 1803, from the Mysore frontier, and crossed the Toombucram river on the 12th. He displayed the judgment and skill for which he was afterwards so conspicuous, in preventing plunder and every excess, and in making such arrangements for his supplies as to prevent injury to the people of the districts through which his route was directed, and so to protect and conciliate them. He was in consequence able to obtain abundant supplies along his whole march. He was welcomed by the population, and so far from meeting with opposition was joined by most of the chiefs of the country. They relied implicitly on his assurance, that those who deserved well should be recommended to the particular favour of the Peshwa. Several who had been under the displeasure of the latter were induced to co-operate with General Wellesley, on his promise that the influence of the British Government should be exerted to restore them to the favour of their sovereign. On the 15th of April he effected a junction with the subsidiary force and native troops of the Nizam. On news of his advance Jeswunt Rao Holkar fell back, and with the main body of his army retreated 130 miles north-east from Poonah, which was left to Amrut Rao and a body of 1500 men. As General Wellesley advanced towards Poonah, he received intelligence that Amrut Rao intended to plunder and burn the city as soon as the British were in sight; and the Peshwa sent him the most pressing entreaties to provide for the safety of his family, who still remained at Poonah. General Wellesley was sixty miles from Poonah on the 19th of April, and

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placing himself in person at the head of the British cavalry and some of the Peshwa's Mahratta troops, marched the sixty miles through a rugged country in thirty-two hours, and arrived unexpectedly at Poonah. By the celerity of this march he took Amrut Rao by surprise. The news of his approach preceded the English general only a few hours, and on hearing of it on the morning of the 20th, Amrut Rao precipitately retired leaving the city in safety. The general and his troops were welcomed as deliverers by all who had remained, and those who had deserted their homes and fled to the hills during Holkar's usurpation, immediately returned to their houses and resumed their ordinary avocations.

Lord Wellesley writes with just pride:—"It is a circumstance equally honourable to the British character and propitious to the British interests in that quarter of India, that the first effects of the British influence in the Mahratta dominions should have been displayed in rescuing the capital of the Empire from impending ruin, and its inhabitants from violence and rapine." On the 13th of May, the Peshwa, attended by a numerous train of Mahratta chiefs, entered Poonah and resumed his seat on the Musnud, his restoration having been effected in two months from the commencement of the British march, without spilling a drop of blood and to the great satisfaction of the people.

These proceedings and the Treaty of Bassein were regarded with very different feelings by the great Mahratta powers. Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar temporized at first, and expressed no dissatisfaction with the treaty; indeed, Scindiah, who had in fact

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nominated the minister of the Peshwa by whom the treaty was negotiated, on being pressed by the English Resident, expressly declared that he saw no objection to it, and that on the contrary it provided for the greater security of the chiefs in their relation to the Peshwa. Information, it is true, had reached the Governor-General that messages had been sent by Scindiah to various Mahratta chiefs and commanders, commanding them to hold their troops in readiness for a combined attack on the British; but these were disavowed with such apparent earnestness by Scindiah, that the Resident was satisfied that no hostile designs were entertained, and Lord Wellesley was only too willing to believe, that at all events the Mahratta potentates would not venture to commence a conflict with a power so strong as the British then was and had shown itself to be.

It would have been very strange if the two great Mahratta powers, Scindiah and Berar, had really acquiesced without a struggle in the quiet establishment of a British Protectorate at Poonah. It was wholly subversive of their own respective schemes of aggrandizement; and as to Scindiah, it was in effect the complete emancipation of the Court of Poonah from his control. He was willing enough to call in the British assistance against the irresistible power of Jeswunt Rao Holkar, and that the Peshwa in his distress should promise the required price; but when the service had been rendered the real extent of the price came to be weighed; and so far as it affected Scindiah, the price comprehended the whole spoil of his long aggressive policy towards Poonah. The Rajah of Berar's views were no doubt antagonistic to Scindiah, for he claimed for himself the

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post; but each probably thought, and not without reason, that the other would be a less formidable antagonist to deal with in the future, than were in the present the British, of the tenacity of whose hold India had furnished so many examples. It was therefore very natural and very legitimate that they should come to an understanding, not only amongst themselves but with Holkar, to postpone their own dissensions and to concert measures to get rid of the British intruders into the Mahratta country.

It was as natural and as legitimate that Lord Wellesley, on the other hand, should take and keep the hold which circumstances had given him. But for the British power the Peshwa would have remained a dethroned exile, Scindiah having failed in his attempt to assist him, and the Rajah of Berar having not even made an attempt in his favour. As far as the chiefs and people of the Peshwa's own particular dominion were concerned, they were not dissatisfied. The Treaty of Bassein certainly gave the British at least as legal and good a title to their protectorate over the Peshwa, as any which Scindiah could allege for the control he had usurped, or the Rajah of Berar could advance for the control he hoped to usurp. It was open to the Mahratta powers, Scindiah and Berar, if they had been so minded, and if they had been content therewith, to repudiate the central authority of the Peshwa, as one which by submitting to a foreign protectorate, he had in truth abdicated; and such a proceeding would not have afforded the slightest legitimate excuse for hostilities on the part of the British.

Lord Wellesley was not at all desirous of having a quarrel with the confederate Mahrattas. Wars were

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expensive, and unprofitable in their result, and had always to be justified in an apologetic tone in the despatches to the Directors, who saw in them only fresh peril for their dividends, great risk of loss, with no probability of gain. Lord Wellesley would, therefore, have been only too glad to be able to announce to the Home Government that he had effected the restoration at Poonah, and carried out his favourite scheme of policy at that Court without firing a shot. Peace would have been to him unqualified success, but was fatal to all the ambitious hopes of Scindiah and the Rajah. It is, therefore, with undoubting confidence that we may rely on Lord Wellesley's representations, that he was forced into the hostilities which ensued.

Soon after the restoration at Poonah, Scindiah gathered together a large army on the frontier of the Nizam's territory, in an attitude evidently hostile. It was impossible to suggest any motive for the assembling of an army there, other than a preparation for an attack either on the English or their ally. When it was found that the Rajah of Berar, after communication with Scindiah, had also left his own dominions at the head of his army, and was proceeding to join Scindiah, and accounts came in from all quarters of hostile preparations, and of attempts to seduce the allies of the British into the league which was being formed, the situation of affairs became very serious. At length, in answer to the repeated applications of the British Resident for a positive explanation of the real object of the military movements and preparations, Scindiah said, "I will give an answer when I have talked with the Rajah of Berar, and then you

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shall know whether it is peace or war." It was impossible to disregard this plain intimation of the real designs of Scindiah; but it was still thought expedient to give the Mahrattas an opportunity of peaceably withdrawing from the prosecution of their hostile enterprise. General Wellesley, to whom the conduct of the British affairs in that quarter was confided, after many evasions on the part of the confederates, at length peremptorily required that they should each withdraw his army into his own territories, pledging himself thereupon to withdraw his from the advanced position he occupied into its proper cantonments. Some show of complying with this requisition was made, but with such affected delays and so delusively, as to show to demonstration that they were merely intended for delay and in the hope of amusing the English, while the Mahratta princes were completing their hostile preparations and alliances. Under these circumstances, General Wellesley was satisfied that it was his duty to resent their proceedings, and to bring the matter to issue before the confederates were further strengthened. Hostilities were not, however, actually commenced until the 8th of August, 1803, when General Wellesley commenced his march towards Ahmednuggur, and on the same day he attacked and carried by escalade the town. On the 10th he opened his breaching batteries against the fortress, which on the 12th surrendered; and by the 21st all the districts around Ahmednuggur were taken possession of.

The forces of the combined armies were as follows:— Scindiah, Cavalry, 18,500; Infantry, 11 battalions. Rajah of Berar, Cavalry, 20,000; Infantry, 6000.

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They had, besides, 35 pieces of heavy ordnance, 205 field-pieces, and 500 camel guns.

General Wellesley's entire force consisted of 384 European Cavalry, 1347 Native Cavalry, 1368 European Infantry, 5631 Sepoys, 173 Artillerymen, and 1000 Artillery lascars and pioneers; and he had with him 2400 Cavalry of the Rajah of Mysore, and about 3000 Mahrattas. There was marching to his support a force under Colonel Stevenson, of 8500 men, of whom there were 778 Europeans, all Infantry.

The two British armies having approached, it was arranged that they should, on the 24th of September, make a combined attack on the enemy. General Wellesley, however, ascertained that the enemy were moving to elude his attack, and going towards one of the passes into the Nizam's country, and he found that he must either attack alone, before Colonel Stevenson could effect a junction, or allow the enemy to escape. He determined to attack alone. He found the enemy strongly posted on the bank of a river, near the village of Assaye, and directed his attack against the infantry. His infantry advanced under a very hot artillery fire, the execution of which was terrible, and after a severe engagement the enemy's infantry line gave way in all directions, and his whole army retreated, leaving ninety pieces of cannon in the hands of the victors. Thus ended the battle of Assaye, one of Wellington's victories, achieved with great loss. Although the enemy retreated, they were not routed or dispersed, and General Wellesley and Colonel Stevenson had to proceed with their campaign.

While these operations were going on in the west, a British force, under Colonel Harcourt, attacked

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Cuttack, a sea-board province of the Rajah of Berar on the east, which interposed between the territories of Bengal and those of Madras, and contained the great temple of Juggernaut. Colonel Harcourt rapidly overran and subdued the province, where he was welcomed by the native Hindoo population, and found no difficulty in bringing into alliance with the British many of the inferior rajahs, zemindars, and others amongst the Mahrattas themselves who owned nominal allegiance to the Mahratta Rajah. Colonel Harcourt's campaign on that side of India was eminently successful, and the results great.

The fort and city of Baroch, a Mahratta port on the Bombay coast, were taken by assault by another force despatched for that purpose. The capture of this place was considered of great moment by the Governor-General, as closing access from the sea to Scindiah; but the greatest interest of the Mahratta campaign attaches to the operations and proceedings of General (afterwards Lord) Lake, the Commander-in-Chief. To this general Lord Wellesley communicated in the fullest and most unreserved manner his policy, his wishes, and his own views of what might be obtained, and then left him to act according to his own judgment and decision, assuring him of his most cordial support. General Lake showed himself in all respects worthy of the confidence reposed in him. The instructions given to General Lake pointed out (to use his own summary of them) the expediency of destroying the French power and authority in Hindostan; of seizing their arsenals, military stores, and strong places; of taking possession on account of the British Government of that extent of country which is situated between

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the Ganges and the Jumna, called the Doab; of securing a line of forts on the north-western banks of the Jumna, to protect the navigation of that river; of taking under the protection of the British Government his Majesty Shah Alam; and of forming such connexions with the independent rajahs and petty princes to the north-westward of Hindostan, as would secure their friendship and form a barrier against the power of the Mahratta states.

As soon as Lake heard of the actual commencement of war between General Wellesley and Scindiah, he put his army in motion. The Governor-General had previously, by proclamation, warned all British subjects, and all natives of British India, serving in Scindiah's regular army, of whom there were many, to leave his service. This proclamation being coupled with offers to take them into the English service or otherwise to compensate them for their loss, produced a considerable effect in weakening the enemy. The French general, M. Perron, had himself, before the outbreak of hostilities and from personal considerations, expressed a wish to retire from Scindiah's service and his position in India, and had applied for a safe conduct for himself and his wealth through British territory, which had been granted him. As soon, however, as war actually broke out, M. Perron, with proper soldierly feeling, resolved to stand by his nominal master, or at least by his own army, and took the field at their head.

General Lake, on the 29th of August, 1803, found Perron strongly posted near the fortress of Aligarh, on which his right rested, his entire front being protected by a deep morass. By a considerable détour

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the British General turned the left flank of the enemy, dislodging a body of troops posted in a village in their front. He then moved forward with his cavalry in two lines, supported by a line of infantry and guns, and the enemy after a very few shots from the guns with the cavalry, which did some little execution, retired, making a very rapid retreat from the field. The British loss in men and horses was very inconsiderable and did not comprise a single officer. The loss of the enemy was also small. Their army consisted entirely of cavalry, except a few matchlock men, and "they were" (writes Lake) "so quick in their retreat the moment we attempted to charge them, that there was no possibility of catching many of them." But this battle, so little sanguinary, was in effect decisive of the campaign; Perron with his body-guard retired towards Agra, leaving M. Pedron in the fort of Aligarh.

The natives had hitherto always thought Perron invincible, but most of them now left him; and the very next day Lake was able to inform the Governor-General that the inhabitants were coming in fast, manifesting a wish to place themselves under British protection. The English General immediately caused it to be made known to the head men of the villages, that it was not his intention to molest either the persons or properties of the inhabitants who should claim his protection. The people of the town of Coel, who had fled the day before on his approach, returned fast to their homes, and the town was already nearly repeopled, under the protection of a battalion which was posted there to prevent plunder, so that very little loss was sustained by the inhabitants. On the same day

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Lake was able further to report, that the country in his rear was in a state of perfect tranquillity; that the horse had all retired, as he believed, to their own homes, as no depredations had been committed, and that not a horseman was to be seen or heard of in that part of the Doab, or in any of the British districts; and in fine he congratulated the Governor-General on the full possession of the Doab. Lake immediately summoned the fortress of Aligarh to surrender; and after spending some days in fruitless endeavours to obtain the surrender of the fortress by purchase, finding that the garrison persisted obstinately in their determination to resist, and in their rejection of his overtures, he determined to try an assault.

The assault was given accordingly on the morning of the 4th of September. The assaulting force consisted of four companies of the 76th Royal Regiment, one battalion of native infantry, and a detachment from another native regiment. With this force, Colonel Monson, leading his men on under a most galling fire of musketry and grape, almost immediately carried the fort, hitherto deemed impregnable and defended on all sides with the utmost obstinacy. Although the entire loss of the British was from the rapidity of the attack not great (223 rank and file), the nature of the task may be estimated from the loss of officers. The 76th Regiment had its colonel and its major wounded, a captain, adjutant, and three lieutenants killed, and two other lieutenants wounded. The fortress which was thus taken was found armed with seventy-eight pieces of artillery; and besides the ordnance actually mounted, there were found 26 brass and iron guns, and 182 iron wall-pieces in the arsenal. From the

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great breadth of the ditch and its depth of water the attack was only practicable on the gates, three of which it was necessary to burst open. The gates were uncommonly strong, and the road to them was completely covered by batteries and other strong works in the fort, from which the enemy did much execution.

Lake after this halted two days only in his position at Coel; and leaving a garrison in the fortress and detaching a brigade of cavalry (one royal regiment and two native regiments) to deal with a force of the enemy's cavalry, which had made an irruption into the British territory, he marched rapidly on with the remainder of his army. On the 11th of September he encountered a very large force, both of cavalry and infantry, with a numerous artillery under the command of one of Perron's officers, M. Bourquin, or as he was generally called M. Louis. After a long march of eighteen miles in the morning, the British having learnt that M. Louis had crossed the Jumna from Delhi to attack them, had hardly encamped when they found their outposts assailed by a strong body. On reconnoitring, Lake found the whole army drawn up in order of battle, and immediately ordered out the whole line and advanced to attack the foe in front. The enemy at first opposed to them a tremendous fire of grape and chain shot, from the numerous artillery, uncommonly well served, and causing great loss, which did not, however, check the British advance. A charge of bayonets by the latter caused a most precipitate retreat, and the enemy left the whole of their artillery in Lake's hands. The British cavalry pursued the fugitives to the Jumna, making great havoc; and numbers were drowned in attempting to cross.

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The completeness of this victory was principally due to the steadiness and coolness of the infantry, who advanced to within one hundred paces of the enemy without taking their firelocks from their shoulders, when they fired a volley and rushed on with the bayonet to the charge, which the enemy were unable to face. The English loss was 197 Europeans (including one major, one captain, and two lieutenants, ten non-commissioned officers, and thirty-nine privates killed) and 288 Natives, (including ten officers and thirty-eight privates killed). The whole British army did not consist of more than 4500 men, including only one European regiment of cavalry and one European regiment of infantry, on whom, as will be seen from the loss, the brunt of the fight must have fallen. The enemy were upwards of four times that number, supported by nearly one hundred pieces of cannon, many of a very large calibre. The General might well therefore write, "The more I reflect on the glorious affair of the 11th,[1] the more forcibly I feel the bravery and intrepidity displayed by every individual composing my army." The garrison left in Delhi on hearing of the rout of their army, after plundering the city, left it precipitately; and they, as well as the remains of Louis's army, dispersed in different directions. The country people were so enraged at their plundering them, that they retaliated by plundering and killing those who fell into their hands; and the French officers were obliged to seek their personal safety by delivering themselves up to the British on the 15th of September.

Shah Alam had for a number of years past been

[1] Known as "The Battle of Delhi."

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under the power and control of the French faction. "The oppressive and degrading manner" (writes Lake) "in which they had exerted their authority, their insulting conduct to the royal family, the state of rigorous confinement in which it had been detained, and the extreme indigence to which it was reduced by French rapacity, were all circumstances which rendered this monarch eager to receive the British protection, and made him view its approach with joy and exultation. Every effort, which the liberty he had now obtained gave him the power of exerting, was employed in affording the British army the means of crossing the river into Delhi, and in testifying the extreme satisfaction of himself and his dependents at the success of the British."

The Governor-General, however, had been careful that the Shah should not be deluded by any vain hope of restoration to his imperial power, or to any power. Lord Wellesley had furnished General Lake with a letter to "His Majesty, Shah Alam," which after many expressions of respect concluded by offering the monarch an asylum with adequate provision for himself and his household;[2] and the unfortunate monarch was, after all he had suffered, only too glad to avail himself of the promised protection and provision.

General Lake lost no time in prosecuting his successful march, first to Muttra and then to Agra, a very strong place on the Jumna, with a fort regularly constructed with a deep ditch and high walls, deemed amongst the natives of extraordinary strength. On the 10th of October Lake drove the enemy from the town and from deep ravines near. By the morning of

[2] See p. 233, vol. iii., of Wellesley's Despatches.

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the 17th the breaching batteries were ready, and in the course of that day they did so much execution that the garrison of 5000 men capitulated, and on the 18th marched out, leaving the fort to be occupied by the British. The only terms required by the garrison, consisting of the best of Perron's sepoys, were protection to their persons and private property, which were of course granted.

While these military operations were going on with such brilliant results, the political negotiations were making no less progress. Rajah after rajah, chief after chief, gave in their adhesion to the British and entered into treaties of alliance, which were more or less after the same stereotyped form; that is to say, treaties by which they accepted the protection of the English power, and submitted themselves entirely to the English control in all matters of foreign relations and disputes with other powers, and undertook to be governed by English advice in all domestic matters.

There was neither love nor fear in these alliances; so far as they had any preference, these petty potentates probably preferred the English to any other master, having more confidence in their pledged word; and as they were obliged to have some one in the position of master or suzerain, they of course took the protection and placed themselves under control of the power which appeared so great, and whose European soldiers must have been deemed by the natives invincible. Of course a tie so easily made was liable at any moment to be as easily unloosed. Nor has there ever been any delusion in this respect in the councils of the British. It was well understood, that the native chiefs would be faithful, so long as the British power was

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and showed itself strong enough, to punish those who were unfaithful, and to protect those who were faithful to their engagements, and no longer.

One great cause of the marvellous facility with which the English took towns and annexed provinces, was the strict discipline which the commanders enforced. Lord Wellesley repeats more than once with legitimate pride, the following extract from the General's despatch. "It is with a mixed sentiment of pride and pleasure that I inform your lordship that all the inhabitants of this place, who for a time fled, returned to their habitations last night on perceiving that no ravages had been committed by the troops. I am informed from all quarters that the inhabitants behold with astonishment this proof of the discipline and good conduct of the army; all declare that hitherto it has been unknown in Hindostan that a victorious army should pass through a country without destroying by fire, and committing every excess the most injurious to the inhabitants, but on the contrary, from the regularity observed by us, our approach is a blessing, instead of bringing with it all the horrors of war attended by rapine and murder; that their cattle remain in their fields unmolested and the inhabitants in their houses receive every protection. The favourable opinion the inhabitants have formed of us cannot fail of producing the most beneficial consequences."[3]

Just before the fall of Agra, Scindiah made one great effort to recover the possessions of which he had been deprived by Lake. He gathered together the whole force of infantry which remained to him in Hindostan, and a considerable body of cavalry, with which he took

[3] See p. 427, vol. iii., of Wellesley's Despatches.

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up a position about thirty miles to the rear of the British encampment before Agra. As soon as the surrender of the fortress released the British forces detained there, Lake marched to seek the enemy and force them to an engagement. It was all-important to prevent the enemy, who retired after the fall of Agra, from eluding the attack. Leaving his heavy guns and most of his baggage behind him, Lake, on the mornings of the 30th and 31st of October, 1803, marched forty miles, although the climate was extremely unfavourable to rapid movements by his European troops.

Receiving certain intelligence that the enemy were encamped about twenty-five miles in his front, and intended by a very long march the next day to frustrate his intention, Lake set out at midnight with his cavalry, desiring his infantry to follow him with all expedition, starting at three in the morning. He succeeded with his cavalry in coming up with the enemy just as they were moving at daylight, having in forty-eight hours accomplished a march of sixty-five miles. He immediately attacked with his cavalry, and so succeeded in detaining the enemy until noon, when the infantry arrived. He then at once made a general attack with his whole line, and the result was the great and crowning victory of Laswary.

It was while it lasted a desperate conflict. The enemy offered a most vigorous resistance until he lost his guns; and then abandoned his post. The left wing did not then fly, but attempted to retreat in good order, but two regiments of cavalry—one European, the 27th, and one native, under Colonel Vandeleur—succeeded in breaking in upon the retreating column, who were all cut up or made prisoners. With the exception of

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2000 prisoners few of the enemy escaped the general slaughter. The enemy's army comprised seventeen regular battalions of infantry—the whole residue of the troops which had been disciplined by the French. General Lake had therefore to congratulate the Governor-General on the complete annihilation of the whole of the regular force in Scindiah's service commanded by French officers, which had been so long the subject of apprehension to the British Government, not indeed without cause. "These battalions" (writes the General) "are most uncommonly well appointed, have a most numerous artillery as well served as they can possibly be; the gunners standing to their guns until killed by the bayonet. All the sepoys of the enemy behaved exceedingly well, and if they had been commanded by French officers the event would have been, I fear, extremely doubtful. I never was in so severe a business in my life, or anything like it, and pray to God I never may be in such a situation again." The brunt of the engagement fell as usual on the Europeans, of whom there were killed or wounded 39 officers, 38 sergeants, and 315 privates. It was not then without great reason that Lake did earnestly "wish for more men from England."

On the other side of India, General Wellesley and Colonel Stevenson were pursuing their career of victories and successful storming of towns. At length, on the 30th of November, 1803, General Wellesley was able to bring the combined armies of the Rajah of Berar and of Scindiah to a general engagement at Argaum. After a long day's march on a very hot day, the English General was preparing to encamp his troops, when he perceived a long line of infantry, cavalry, and artil-

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lery, regularly drawn up on the plains of Argaum, about six miles from his intended encampment. Although late in the day, and notwithstanding the fatigue of the long march, General Wellesley determined to attack the army at once. A large body of Pathans, who attempted an attack on the 76th and 78th Regiments as these were advancing, were destroyed ; and Scindiah's cavalry, which charged a battalion of Sepoy infantry on the left, were repulsed. Dispirited by these failures, the whole army retired in disorder before the British troops, leaving in their hands thirty-eight pieces of cannon and all their ammunition. The lateness of the hour prevented the rout being so complete as it would otherwise have been, but the British, Mogul, and Mysore cavalry pursued the fugitives for many miles, continuing the pursuit by moonlight, destroying great numbers, and taking many elephants, camels, and much baggage.

The British loss was not great, but as usual fell disproportionately on the small European force, of whom there were 15 killed and 145 wounded, to 31 killed and 147 wounded out of the large number of native soldiers.

After the victory of Argaum, General Wellesley lost no time in commencing the siege of Gawilgurh, a strong fortress situated in a range of mountains near the sources of the Taptee and the Purna. From the 7th to the 12th of December, the heavy siege ordnance and stores had to be dragged by the troops by hand, over mountains and through ravines, by roads which the troops had previously to make for themselves. On the night of the 12th the breaching batteries were placed in position. On the 13th the fire opened, on

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the 14th, at night, the breaches in the outer wall were declared practicable, and the next morning the assault was given, and the outer wall was soon carried. The inner wall had not been breached, but a party of light infantry of the 94th Regiment, under Captain Campbell, succeeded in mounting it by ladders, getting into the place, and opening the gate for the storming party; and the strong fortress was shortly in the possession of the British.

With this brilliant achievement the Mahratta campaign closed. Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar were beaten at every point by a series of military operations, over a theatre of war, the extent of which may be estimated from the fact, that from Cuttack to Baroch is in a straight line 1000 miles, and from Ahmednuggur (where General Wellesley broke ground on the 12th of August) to Delhi, more than 700 miles.

They sued for peace; the Governor-General was in a position to dictate his own terms; and on the 17th of December, 1803, the Rajah of Berar's minister and General Wellesley signed a treaty, the important provisions of which treaty were,—

1. The cession of the province of Cuttack, including the post and district of Balasore, and of all the Rajah's territories to the westward of the river Wurda, of all of which he had been joint owner with the Nizam.

2. The renunciation of all claims on the Nizam.

3. An engagement by the Rajah not to take or retain in his service any Frenchman, or the subject of any European or American power at war with the British, or any British subject.

4. A confirmation of the treaties made by the British with the Rajah's feudatories.

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5. A renunciation of the confederacy formed by him with Scindiah and other Mahratta chiefs, to attack the Company and their allies.

The Company on their part undertook to mediate and arbitrate according to the principles of justice, in any disputes between the Rajah and the Company's allies, the Nizam and the Peshwa, and not to give aid or countenance to any discontented relations, rajahs, zemindars, or other subjects of the Rajah, who should fly from or rebel against his authority.

On the 30th of December, General Wellesley also signed a treaty with the ministers of Scindiah. By this the Maharajah ceded the territory in the Doab, and all that he had to the northward of Jeypoor and Joudpoor, the forts of Baroch and Ahmednuggur and their territories, and all to the south of the Adjuntee Hills, including all his districts between that range of hills and the Godavery; and he renounced all claims of every description on the Company and their allies the Nizam, the Peshwa and Guicowar, reserving to himself and to certain of his chiefs the rights of property free of all payment to the Government, in certain districts which were alleged to be his ancestral property, or to have been given to the chiefs for their support. He confirmed all treaties made by the British with his feudatories, renounced all claims on them, and declared them to be independent, provided that this should not extend to any of his territories to the southward of Jeypoor, Joudpoor and Gohun. He renounced all claims on his Majesty Shah Alam, and engaged to interfere no further in his affairs, and entered into an engagement, similar to that which the Rajah of Berar had entered into, as to the employ-

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ment of Frenchmen or other foreigners or British subjects. By a special article, the option was given to Scindiah to accede to the treaties of general defensive alliance between the Company, the Nizam, and the Peshwa, and on his making such option, which he afterwards did, the Company were to furnish him with a subsidiary force of seven battalions.

By these treaties a vast accession of territory was made. But the more important results in Lord Wellesley's view were, that the whole sea-coast was now in the hands of the British and their dependent allies, so as to preclude all access to any European enemy; that the great Mahratta states of the Peshwa and Scindiah were placed under the protection of the Company; that by the treaties with almost the whole body of the smaller powers of India, confirmed by the general treaties with the Mahratta potentates, and the very general agreements to submit disputes to the arbitration of the Company's Government, the power of any Mahratta chief to establish a real Mahratta Empire or to increase his dominions was effectually precluded; that the French party was wholly annihilated; and that with the possession of the person of the Shah, as pensioner of the state, the power and influence which the use of the Imperial name might still have given, was, if not actually vested in the British, at all events prevented from being turned against them. The British had now become substantially the sovereigns of India, and had succeeded to far more than the power, which had ever been really acquired by any Great Mogul.

Lord Wellesley claimed as one of the results of his policy the elevation of the fame and glory of the

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British nation in India, by the splendid achievements of the war, and by the clemency, moderation, and public faith which distinguished the British counsels on the conclusion of the peace. His hopes were sanguine that the British power would now be enabled to control the causes of that internal warfare, which, during so long a series of years, had desolated many of the most fertile provinces of India, and had formed an inexhaustible source for the supply of military adventurers, prepared to join the standard of any turbulent leader for the purpose of ambition or plunder; and he trusted "that a general bond of connexion has now been established between the British Government and the principal states of India, on principles which render it the interest of every state to maintain its alliance with the British Government, which preclude the inordinate aggrandizement of any one of those states by an usurpation of the rights and possessions of others and which secure to every state the unmolested exercise of its separate authority within the limits of its established dominion, under the general protection of the British power." He was a little premature and a little over-sanguine as to the new reign of peace; the results obtained, however, were very great. Is there any ground for imputing to the British Government that they were obtained improperly or unfairly, or as the fruits of an ambitious and aggressive policy, or for charging the Governor-General with a violation of the spirit or the letter of the express legislative declaration and enactment denouncing and forbidding aggressive wars, and all schemes for the extension of the British territorial possessions in the East? The British nation sincerely

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dreaded and disliked all territorial extension in India; and the Court of Directors and the Government fully shared the national feeling. No greater proof could be found of this than a despatch, in which they requested Lord Wellesley to consider again whether it would not be better to give back everything he had gained from the Mahrattas, and intimated pretty clearly their inability to furnish the requisite military force for the defence of the empire which he had created.

Lord Wellesley for himself always indignantly denied that he was in the slightest degree actuated by any vulgar ambition of increased dominion. He was personally satisfied, as he well might be, with the glory of the Mysore war. He was on bad terms with the Court of Directors, who had in many ways and on many occasions slighted, thwarted, and in an offensive manner overruled him, and he was really anxious to return home at the very time when the events occurred which led to the Mahratta campaign, which made it his duty to remain at his post until he had brought the matter to a conclusion. He had plainly intimated, that while it was his inclination and his duty to manifest prompt obedience to the orders of the Directors, it was his primary duty to maintain at all hazards the security of the British possessions, and that he should have in constant remembrance that the law had invested him "with a trust for the Company and for the British empire, as well as for the Court of Directors."

In this he really understated his case. He had another and a higher trust, a trust imposed on the British nation themselves, for the people of British India. It was his duty to do what a just, good, and

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competent sovereign would have done, if that sovereign had been a native and hereditary monarch, instead of being a foreigner, exercising the powers of a temporary proconsulate. Tried by that, the only true test, nothing was done by Lord Wellesley which it was not his full right and bounden duty to do.

To have allowed a lawless and unscrupulous adventurer like Jeswunt Rao Holkar to establish himself at Poonah, would have been an act of culpable neglect. Such an adventurer would probably, if not interfered with, have had as little difficulty in establishing a powerful Mahratta kingdom, as Hyder had in building up his formidable power in Mysore ; and in league with the 40,000 disciplined regular troops under Perron and his French officers he would have been irresistible, and under no restraint in carrying on wars either of aggression or devastation. How formidable he was even alone, if not to the British power, to the poor inhabitants, whom the British were bound to protect, will be seen in the sequel. Every consideration of self-defence against an imminent peril, therefore, rendered it imperative on the British to take up the cause of the expelled Peshwa. Starting from that point, the Treaty of Bassein was a just and proper treaty, and nothing was exacted from the Peshwa that was not consistent with justice, or not required by the plainest exigencies of the situation. In their dissatisfaction with that treaty Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar became clearly the aggressors, and their attitude of unmistakable hostility, with the moral certainty, afterwards fully confirmed, of the offensive league into which they had entered and sought to bring the other Indian powers, rendered the political and

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military measures, which were taken to defeat their designs, a matter of absolute necessity.

In considering the perils of the position in which Lord Wellesley found himself, it is necessary to bear in mind, what his military strength and resources actually were, and the real weakness which he had to supply by promptitude and vigour of action. The whole European force over the whole Indian territory consisted of six batteries of artillery, four regiments of cavalry, thirteen regiments of royal infantry, and three of the Company's infantry. The latter were very indifferent in those days, and the deductions for sick were very heavy, not less than a fourth of the force, and it was very difficult to keep up the nominal strength by recruiting. The sixteen regiments of European infantry would probably have never turned out 11,000 effective bayonets. Sixteen regiments of cavalry, and fifty-nine regiments (118 battalions) of infantry, made up the sum of his native force. From England he had received the unwelcome news, that it was scarcely possible to obtain recruits even for the necessary defence of the British Isles. Hesitation while the enemy were gathering strength, and might possibly be tampering with the native troops, would have been ruin. After the great and brilliant successes obtained against the confederacy, to have allowed them to go unpunished would have been mere imbecility. The sacrifices demanded and the terms imposed were as moderate as they could be consistently with the objects which it was the Governor-General's bounden duty to effect:— that is, to deter, if possible, from a repetition of the offence, and to diminish effectually the power of re-

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peating it with success. Nor was there any one who could truly allege that any wrong was done to him, that any real or just right of his was invaded. Scindiah was himself a mere usurper and conqueror; the Rajah of Berar's power was hardly a generation old, and was the power of the sword; M. Perron was an alien adventurer, who had just obtained his dominions by the abuse, for his own purposes, of the military powers which Scindiah had gathered to aid his aggressions; and there was neither rajah nor chief, zemindar nor ryot, who was not glad to try a new master, or who owed loyalty to the old one.

The feudatories, with whom the treaties were made, made them voluntarily. As to the poor Mogul, it would have been a folly and a crime to the real people of India, the Hindoos, had there been any attempt to restore the power of an oppressive Mohammedan dynasty, which had become effete. Nor did the British Government attempt to derive from the charge of protecting and supporting the monarch, the means of employing the nominal imperial power for the assertion of claims upon the provinces composing the Mogul empire.

The arrangements made for the support of the king and the royal family were such as to secure them the enjoyment of every reasonable comfort and convenience, and every practicable degree of external state and dignity compatible with the extent of the British resources, and the state of dependence in which they must thenceforth live. It may well be doubted, whether the Governor-General was not rather misled by the desire of appearing in the eyes of India, and of the world, as the magnificent protector and benefactor

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of the great Mogul, the representative of Timur. It was not necessary to preserve, as was done, the imperial name and state, the sovereign power over the city of Delhi, and the royal domains assigned for the support of the family. No good could come from keeping before men's eyes in India this phantom of departed imperial power, and evil might, and in fact long afterwards did, come of it. Ninety thousand sicca rupees a month were assigned to the monarch and his family, with an addition of 10,000 rupees annually on certain festivals, agreeably to ancient usage; and a provision for an additional monthly sum of 40,000 rupees of the revenue, if the assigned districts should thereafter admit of it. Having regard to the then value of money at Delhi, and to the state of almost privation in which the Mogul's family had been previously kept, the allowances were not only ample, but magnificent. It would, however, have been really kinder, as well as a more prudent policy, if, preserving the titular rank during the old man's life, the members of the family had been at once reduced to their true position of wealthy nobles, with such social distinction as might be due to their princely birth and high lineage. It is difficult to conceive any worse position for men to be brought up in, than as the idle titular princes at the court of a titular emperor, with all its mock ceremonial and pageantry.

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CHAPTER IX.

1804—1805. Lord Wellesley. End of the Mahratta War.

THE peace which had been established by the treaties with Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar was of short duration, owing to the intrigues of Jeswunt Rao Holkar, who had usurped the possessions of the Holkar family in the name of Khundah Rao, the pretender whom he had brought forward to the exclusion of Cashee the legitimate successor. It was no part of the British policy to interfere in these family disputes, or that there should be any interposition of British power, unless absolutely required for the security of the chiefs and states with whom defensive alliances had been contracted.

Both Lake and Lord Wellesley thought it highly improbable, as Holkar had not taken advantage of the opportunities afforded him in the midst of their arduous struggle with Scindiah, Perron, and the Rajah of Berar, that he would now venture to provoke a conflict with the British power, strengthened and consolidated as it had been by the results of the campaign. They were mistaken.

Although both the English Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief then looked upon a war waged by such a person as Jeswunt Rao against such a power as the British as an act of folly, which it was

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scarcely possible a man of his craft could be guilty of, yet, looking back now, with the knowledge of the events which really happened, we feel that the Mahratta adventurer, or freebooter as he was called, was a man of uncommon talents, and that his schemes were formed with great ability, and carried out with great energy, as well as with the duplicity which in the East seems always to accompany ability.

In listening to the overtures of Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar for an active offensive alliance against the British, he had obtained not only substantial concessions of land and pecuniary means, but a recognition by the two greatest Mahratta powers of himself as a power. He had ceased to be a mere captain of a horde of plunderers, and was now a Mahratta potentate. Using the means and influence thus obtained to increase and strengthen his army, he stood aloof during the struggle. It did not suit his policy to be aiding as an humble ally the two other powers, who if they had succeeded would probably have broken faith with him as easily as he broke faith with them. When the contest was ended, to the discomfiture but not to the ruin of the two Mahratta powers, who were still left at the head of very considerable states, and when the English were tired of, and as he imagined exhausted by, an expensive war, Jeswunt thought his opportunity had come, and seized it boldly. Assuming a haughty and insolent tone towards the English, he demanded of them, firstly, the concession of several large territories within their recent conquests, which, he alleged, had at one time belonged to the Holkar family; and, secondly, a treaty recognizing him as sovereign of the Holkar dominions, and guaranteeing him their possession. To

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these insolent demands was added a menace, that in the event of war, although unable to oppose the British artillery in the field, "countries of many hundred coss should be overrun and plundered and burnt; the Commander-in-Chief should not have leisure to breathe for a moment; and calamities would fall on lacs of human beings in continued war by the attacks of his army, which overwhelms like the waves of the sea." Nor was this menance altogether an idle one.

The charges of Holkar's troops greatly exceeded the resources of his usurped dominion, and had been defrayed by black mail on the profits of indiscriminate plunder; and continued predatory warfare was in fact the only thing his followers had to look to. Not only were these men ready for any enterprise of plunder, but the numerous bands of irregular troops, which had been thrown out of service by the peace, were naturally attracted to his banner. This made him formidable enough; but he was more than a bold freebooter; he was evidently a skilful diplomatist.

His agents intrigued successfully with many discontented chiefs and zemindars; and amongst others with the Rajah of Bhurtpore, a powerful, wealthy, and influential prince, holding a commanding territory with strong fortresses, particularly those of Deeg and Bhurtpore. Jeswunt Rao, although himself a Mahratta and a Brahmin, made skilful appeals to the Mohammedans, urging them to come out and expel the infidels. His friends and agents got a footing at the courts of Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar, and in their armies; and he found the means of tampering with corps in the British army itself. It was not therefore against a despicable foe that the Governor-General and

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Commander-in-Chief had now to exert their utmost energies.

Preparations were therefore made, in the autumn of 1804, for a combined attack upon Holkar and his dominions from all sides, by the Commander-in-Chief from the north-east, by General Wellesley from the south-west, by the Guicowar and by Scindiah; but these movements were necessarily delayed by the season, and by the impossibility of obtaining supplies in the countries to be traversed, which had been already stripped. During this delay, disasters befell the British. Another chieftain, Meer Khan, at the head of a considerable predatory force burst into Bundelcund. A small British detachment was wholly cut off, and the main body from which it had been detached, deceived by exaggerated reports of the strength of the invading bands, made a hasty retreat. This gave confidence to the enemy. Shortly afterwards Colonel Monson—described by the Commander-in-Chief as an officer brave as a lion, but wholly without judgment—at the head of a very considerable force (five battalions and six companies), already in an advanced position, thought himself strong enough to advance further, was attacked at a disadvantage by Holkar at the head of a large force, was beaten and obliged to make a precipitate retreat with great loss, and to allow the greater part of his baggage to fall into the enemy's hands.

Taking up a fresh position, Monson found himself surrounded on all sides by the enemy's cavalry, and discovered, moreover, that some of the native commissioned officers were in correspondence with Holkar. Two companies of Sepoys and 400 irregular cavalry

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actually deserted him, and went over; he knew not how far the contagion of t reason might spread, and he had to retreat, fighting his way pursued by overwhelming masses of the enemy. Officers and men appear during this retreat to have behaved with great courage and discipline; and at length, after eight days' continued retreat, harassed by the pursuing foe in every direction, the several corps reached Agra, much diminished in numbers, and with the loss of guns and baggage.

The disaster, serious as it was, was partly due to a cause not less disastrous. Bapojee Scindiah, commander of one of the principal divisions of Scindiah's army, had been despatched with ostensible orders to join the British in fulfilment of the treaty of alliance, and having joined Monson had at the most critical moment gone over openly to Holkar, and, as was suspected, not wholly without the privity of his master, although the latter strongly protested his innocence of the treason. The Rajah of Bhurtpore now openly took the side of Holkar, although he was one of the first of the princes who had sought the English alliance and protection, and had actually been rewarded with a grant of territory for his supposed friendship and loyalty. Exaggerated accounts of the disaster to Monson's corps spread over India; and Holkar's prestige was great as the conqueror of the British, who had been at last found not invincible by a Mahratta. A little more, and Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar would have openly declared themselves as the allies of Holkar, who would have become generalissimo of all the Mahratta forces. It was a time of great peril for the British.

Holkar showed himself not deficient in activity in

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following up his advantage, and made a rapid march against Delhi, which was protected only by a very small British force, and was very indifferently fortified. It was, however, after the usual fashion of British officers in India, resolutely defended by the gallant band within; and after three or four unsuccessful attempts at assault, Holkar, alarmed by Lake's approach, was fain to draw off. Lake was as active as Holkar; and luckily he had taken great pains in organizing and disciplining his cavalry, which was all-important against an enemy like Holkar, whose object was to make sudden attacks on many points, and to elude anything like a general engagement.

Having ascertained that Holkar with his cavalry was near, Lake marched out before daylight to attack him, and reached his camp just as day broke, but not before the alarm had been given. The horse artillery and the cavalry were able to do some execution; but the enemy, by a rapid flight, succeeded in getting off with little loss towards Bhurtpore. Besides his cavalry, Holkar had gathered together a very considerable force of infantry and artillery, partly his own, and partly those of his ally, the Rajah of Bhurtpore.

Determined to bring the matter to a rapid conclusion, Lake divided his small army into two; and placing the greater part of the infantry and artillery under General Frazer, to deal with the infantry and artillery of Holkar, he put himself at the head of the other division, determined to run down Holkar, and bring him to bay.

Frazer came into collision with his opponents, who were strongly posted near the fortress of Deeg. His division consisted of two regiments of native cavalry, and six battalions of native infantry, the park of

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artillery, one European Company's regiment, and above all, that which was to Lake what the 10th legion was to Cæsar or the old guard to Napoleon, the 76th Regiment of Royal Infantry, or at least so much of it as had survived the hard wear and tear of the previous campaign. The enemy's force, under Holkar's chief lieutenant, consisted of twenty-four battalions of infantry, a considerable body of horse, and 160 pieces of cannon. Frazer immediately made arrangements for attacking them, heading the 76th Regiment himself, but fell mortally wounded, and the command devolved on Colonel Monson. Range after range of batteries on the right of the enemy was carried by the impetuous advance over two miles of country, the enemy flying into a swamp and up to the very walls of the fortress of Deeg; then the British commander rapidly wheeled round upon the enemy's left, which in its turn fled precipitately into a lake hard by, where numbers of them perished. The enemy made no further opposition, but entirely quitted the field, flying in all directions. Many took shelter in the fortress in the greatest consternation, and, as was almost invariably the case with native armies after a defeat, began to desert in vast numbers. Lake, who was not present himself, writing privately and confidentially to Lord Wellesley, talks of it "as the great and glorious victory gained by Frazer and Monson, which I really do think appears to surpass anything that has hitherto been done in India," and writing a day or two afterwards, says, "I have every reason to believe that the action of the 13th was a very near business. The personal courage of Monson and others alone saved it."

Lake meanwhile himself pursued Holkar very closely,

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marching for seventeen days together, twenty-three or twenty-four miles a day. At length, hearing that Holkar was encamped under the walls of Farukebad, obtaining money and supplies from that place, Lake resolved to leave his infantry and baggage, and put himself at the head of his cavalry and horse artillery. They had travelled thirty miles on the forenoon of the 16th of November; they proceeded nearly a similar distance in the course of the night, and succeeded in surprising the enemy at daybreak the following morning. The horse artillery opened a most destructive fire, and the different regiments of cavalry instantly charged with impetuosity. The enemy were completely surprised, and at once thrown into confusion. Most of their horses were at picket; and those who had mounted were unable to oppose the least resistance; great numbers were killed; and the rest dispersed in every direction, and were pursued over the adjoining country with great slaughter. This destruction of Holkar's cavalry, following on the rout of his infantry and artillery, was decisive of the campaign. All that were before ready to join him now hastened to abandon his fallen fortunes. Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar disavowed all alliance with him, and were only too glad that the Governor-General's policy was not to inquire too closely into what they had done. On the other or Bombay side the British and their allies were rapidly overrunning the Holkar dominions, and taking place after place.

The British now turned to punish the defection of the Rajah of Bhurtpore. His fortress of Deeg was soon stormed; but Bhurtpore itself was more lucky. Four successive attempts at assaulting it

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failed, and the British were preparing for further siege operations when the Rajah made his submission. His fortress of Deeg was taken from him in pledge for his good behaviour. The territory which had been given him was resumed, and he was mulcted in a heavy fine for the expenses of the war. As his pecuniary resources had been much wasted in his unlucky confederacy with Holkar, he was allowed to discharge the fine by yearly instalments, with a promise that the last should be remitted, if his continued good behaviour should merit it.

Thus practically ended the campaign against Holkar; but some embers of the conflagration had still to be stamped out. Meer Khan had to be hunted down, and some remains of Holkar's forces which gathered together had to be dispersed. Holkar himself with a small force took refuge with Scindiah, with whose minister he was on terms of intimate alliance, and over whose court he contrived still to exercise great influence. He had ceased, however, to be really formidable, and although the terms of peace were not actually signed until the end of the year, Lord Wellesley thought it in May, 1805, possible and desirable to make a settlement without further war; and the British army, ordered into cantonments, rested from their labours.

Lord Wellesley sailed for England in August, 1805, At the close of his administration the Indian dominions in the actual possession and under the immediate rule of the British comprehended the whole sea coast of the Peninsula from the mouths of the Ganges to Cape Comorin, and with the exception of the seaboard of the small dependent states of Travancore and Cochin on the south, and of the

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Guicowar's on the north, substantially the whole sea coast on the other side from Cape Comorin to the Gulf of Cutch. The British territory within this coast-line comprised the whole valley of the Ganges, except what was left to the allied Nawab Vizier of Oude; the Doab or country between the Ganges and the Jumna; the extensive provinces which to this day constitute the Presidency of Madras; and the smaller but not insignificant countries under the Government of Bombay. Mysore was in the hands of a prince who owed his throne to the English, and their troops occupied the capital and stronghold of Seringapatam. Not only this prince, but the Peshwa and the Nizam had by the subsidiary treaties agreed to place themselves completely under the control of the Calcutta Government. The great seat of the Mohammedan Empire of India, Delhi, was occupied by the English, and the titular emperor, the representative of the line of Timur, was in their hands, a pensioner on their bounty.

The external commerce of India was centred in the three British ports of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, marts which owed their very existence to the English. There was no naval force but the British, with the exception of some piratical squadrons, which continued for a few years longer to infest the seas. In fine, the Governor-General of India had, during Lord Wellesley's proconsulate, become more completely and more absolutely the sovereign paramount of India than any of the Mohammedan emperors had been, with larger domains under his own immediate rule and government, and with more complete control over the princes of the other provinces.

The Anglo-Indian Empire was firmly established.

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In looking back at this great creation, we are struck with the smallness of the means by which the results were achieved. On the 1st of April, 1805, the whole of the royal regiments in India, including 2000 sick, did not exceed 12,778; the Company's European infantry were reduced to 717, and their artillery did not exceed 2393 men. In July of that year the Governor-General in Council wrote thus:—"The Governor-General will not continue to be alarmed for the security of this empire, if the European establishments shall be completed to the extent, which his meeting in council has proposed for the continent of India, of sixteen regiments of his Majesty's infantry of 1000 men each, three regiments of the Company's infantry of the same strength, with four regiments of dragoons at 640 men each, and a due proportion of European artillery." The native troops at the same time amounted to sixteen regiments of cavalry and fifty-nine regiments (118 battalions) of infantry. From the correspondence between Lord Wellesley and the home authorities, it appears that but faint promises were held out, that in the military state of England at that time she could afford the quota of European soldiers, which the Governor-General rather ventured to hope for than expected to have.

The revenues of India when Lord Wellesley assumed the government amounted to rather more than seven millions and a quarter, and grew to thirteen and a half millions by the year 1806-7. Since that time we have become so familiarized with the expenditure of enormous sums for military purposes, and with the creation of gigantic debts, that it is very difficult to realize the full measure of alarm,

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almost of terror, which was produced at home when it was ascertained that the arduous wars, in which Lord Wellesley's whole period of administration was spent, had resulted in an augmentation of the Indian national debt by no less a sum than eleven millions sterling.

Notwithstanding all the triumphs of Lord Wellesley's career, and the great ability which he had displayed throughout, he had never really obtained the approbation or cordial support of his masters, the East India Company, with whom he was generally on bad terms. They resented his imperious and autocratic style, and his hardly-concealed disregard of and contempt for their wishes and opinions. On two of the points on which they were most susceptible, patronage in India and private trade, he had given them grave offence. The disputes as to the first are too trivial for further notice. The other reminds us again of the wonderful patience, with which the English nation and its rulers continued to submit to the trade monopoly of the Company, and to regard it as a thing so good, so just, and so natural, that the Company did not scruple openly to avow as a ground of quarrel with their Governor-General that he had endeavoured to do something for opening trade to the private traders from England, and to the native-built shipping of India. But apart from these wretched grounds of discontent with his proceedings, they had other more legitimate causes of dissatisfaction. They had a great disinclination to all schemes of conquest and aggression, not a feigned or hypocritical affectation of moderation on their part, but a dread as real as it was natural and legitimate in their position. As a Company they could never hope to obtain any

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benefit from the growth of the Anglo-Indian Empire. Their annuity was fixed at a certain sum, which was not likely ever to be exceeded, but which might fail if the resources of India and the profits of the trade should be unable to meet the expenses of a warlike policy, fertile in glory to the Governor-General and his commanders, but barren of profit to the Indian exchequer.

The Governor-General's successes might dazzle the multitude, but to the Directors they afforded no compensation for his heterodox notions on that which was then to them the greatest of all questions—the question of private trade. They distrusted, reasonably enough, his calculations, as they have distrusted every succeeding Governor-General's calculations, of the profits to be derived from conquered territories; they dreaded lest the swollen Empire should break down under its own weight; and they had a prudent, almost instinctive, foresight of the dangerous entanglements, in which they might find themselves involved by the subsidiary alliances and treaties of dependence and protection, in which their Governor-General had bound them and the native powers. If they had been permitted by the Board of Control, the Directors would have sent a despatch entirely condemnatory of Lord Wellesley's policy and measures. Although he was supported, not very cordially, by the Government and by Parliament, he was almost unanimously condemned by the Court of Proprietors, who resolved, by a majority of 928 to 195, that—

"This Court do most highly approve [the conduct of the Directors in their efforts] to restrain a profuse expenditure of public money, and to prevent all schemes of conquest and extension of dominion,

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measures which the legislature has declared to be repugnant to the wish, the honour and the policy of the nation."

The financial state of India for the next few years appeared indeed to justify the apprehensions of the Company as to the results of the ambitious policy of their Governor-General. Deficit after deficit continued to aggravate their financial difficulties. A cold fit followed in India itself the hot fever of martial ardour. Economy, retrenchment, peace, and non-interference became the watchwords of the English policy. Territories which had been ceded by the Peshwa in Bundelcund were eagerly given up to the native princes, and excuses, not always creditable or honest, were found for relinquishing the honour and so escaping the burthen of the alliances—alliances of dependence and protection—with some of the minor powers. The policy of leaving the princes and leaders of India to manage their own affairs, to settle their own quarrels, to fight their own battles, was ostentatiously proclaimed as the rule of conduct thenceforth to be pursued by the British. They were ready and willing to abdicate the Imperial dignity and power which had fallen into their unwilling hands; and the Company would gladly have returned to the quiet pursuit of commercial gain, and made it their only care to increase their store and to keep their Governor-General at home in their old dominion of Bengal, which was in truth large enough to content any moderate ambition.

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CHAPTER X.

1805—1813. Second Administration of Lord Cornwallis. Sir George Barlow. Lord Minto.

To carry out the new policy of peace and moderation the prudent, cautious veteran Lord Cornwallis, the man of known and tried moderation, was sent out a second time, to rescue the Anglo-Indian Empire from the dangers and difficulties in which the last Governor-General's grandiose schemes were supposed to have involved it.

A confidential letter from Lord Cornwallis to Lord Lake, of August 30th, 1805, is probably the best evidence of the state of public feeling and opinion in England at that time, and of the considerations which induced the Government to select him as Governor-General:—

"You will easily imagine that it was no slight cause that urged the ministers at home to press me to return once more to this country, and that I would not, without seeing very great necessity, have engaged at my time of life in so difficult and, I may say, so rash an undertaking. The real circumstances are, that it is not the opinion only of ministers or of a party, but of all reflecting men of every description, that it is physically impracticable for Great Britain, in addition to all other embarrassments, to maintain so vast and so unwieldy an empire in India, which annually calls for

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reinforcements of men and for remittances of money, and which yields little other profit except brilliant gazettes. It is in vain for us to conceal from ourselves that our finances are at the lowest ebb, and that we literally have not the means of carrying on the ordinary business of government. . . . .

"I am sorry to find that the States who are most intimately connected with us, such as the Peshwa and the Nizam, are reduced to the most forlorn condition; that these powers possess no funds or troops on whom they can depend; that anarchy and disaffection prevail universally throughout their dominions; and that unless the British Residents exercised a power and an ascendency that they ought not to exert, those governments would be immediately dissolved."

In a letter some days later he shows his anxiety to get rid of as much as possible of the territory acquired, and how his mind was occupied, "with a consideration of the means by which, without a positive violation of public faith, we may be relieved from the evils and embarrassments inseparably connected, in my decided judgment, with the maintenance of the alliances with the several petty chieftains on the north of Hindostan."

Lord Cornwallis did not long survive his assumption of office, and a civil servant of the Company, Sir George Barlow, a man fully imbued with the policy and feelings which then governed the councils of Leadenhall Street, was appointed to succeed him.

His short rule was notorious for a startling episode—a mutiny of the native soldiers at Villore in the Madras Presidency, which at the time excited great alarm, and was the subject of much and angry

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discussion. There was a garrison at Villore, which consisted of 370 Europeans and about 1500 natives. At three o'clock one morning the latter suddenly attacked the Europeans, who, suspecting nothing, were quietly at rest and unprepared. Thirteen officers and eighty-two European privates were killed, and ninety-one wounded, and several other Europeans were murdered by the mutinous Sepoys. The remaining officers and Europeans defended themselves gallantly and successfully in a corner of the fortress until help arrived; happily this was not long delayed. The news reached Arcot early in the morning, and Colonel Gillespie, with a small but sufficient force of cavalry and mounted artillery, arrived before the fortress, and, joining the gallant remnant of the European garrison, soon overpowered the mutineers. Between 300 and 400 of the latter were slain, many taken, and the rest dispersed as fugitives in all directions over the country. By the promptitude and energy of these proceedings, the mutiny was at once effectually crushed before it had time to spread; and well it was so, for it was soon found that the disaffection was universal. It turned out that the Commander-in-Chief had issued orders as to the dress and painted marks of the Sepoys, offensive and alarming to their caste prejudices. The respectful remonstrances of some of them had been treated harshly as symptoms of a mutinous spirit, which stern discipline thought ought to be put down with a strong hand and without parley. The men were of course discontented, they became suspicious of their officers and the Government, and they saw in the dress regulations proofs of a deliberate scheme to deprive them of their caste and to make them embrace the

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Christian religion. They might well be excused for so believing, for how could it be supposed that sensible men, as the Frank Sahibs were admitted by all to be, would force a hated dress on their soldiers from a mere caprice of military tailoring and without some sufficient motive? What sufficient motive could be suggested but that of making them conform to Frankish notions of dress as preliminary to a forced conformation to the religion of the infidels? There were, moreover, not wanting, as there never will be wanting in like cases, agents of evil, dependents or partisans of dethroned princes, to stir up the passions of a discontented soldiery, to excite their fears and inflame their passions, by inventing and propagating the wildest stories, and attributing the blackest designs to the foreign rulers.

In looking back now at these painful events, the massacre and the slaughter of that day, we cannot but feel that the mutineers were men to be pitied, rather than to be condemned. It was, moreover, a grave lesson to the civil and military authorities in the scrupulous respect which is due to the religious feelings of the soldiers, and the necessity of great caution and tact in endeavouring by the enforcement of military discipline to repress a genuine feeling of discontent. It is natural that an alien, infidel and outcast Government should occasionally, without any real cause, be suspected of designs against the faith and caste of their subjects, and the most innocent acts may be misunderstood and misrepresented. The true policy of the authorities under such circumstances is to believe that the men are labouring under a delusion real and not feigned, and to deal with them as patients suffering from a temporary

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madness, not as criminals to be delivered up to the penalties of military law. The Madras soldiery were so dealt with, and in a few short months all fears of a wide-spread conspiracy, by which the English were haunted, were dispelled, and harmony and confidence were restored between the Sepoy and his master.

In consequence of this mutiny Lord Minto superseded Sir George Barlow as Governor-General, the latter being appointed Governor of the Madras Presidency. Lord Minto, who reached Calcutta in July, 1807, two years after Lord Wellesley's departure, had, as Sir Gilbert Elliot, taken an active part in the proceedings against Warren Hastings and Sir Elijah Impey, and was a warm supporter of the Indian policy of the Fox party, which had so strenuously and even passionately denounced all aggression on the native powers.

Shortly after his arrival, there occurred a mutinous combination of the English officers in the Company's service in the Madras Presidency. There was a dispute about some trivial matter, some regimental perquisites or allowances, between the civil and military authorities. There was a strange amount of blundering and intemperance on both sides, and the matter was at last taken up by the European officers, with such a violent *esprit de corps* that they entered into compacts to stand by each other in opposition to the Governor, and some of the regiments went so far as actually to seize on Seringapatam in open mutiny and revolt. It is difficult, and now needless, to follow the steps in this quarrel, by which English officers and gentlemen were led, not merely to the verge of, but into

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the actual commission of high treason, or to trace out how a mistaken sense of an honourable obligation one to the other should have led them to forget their most sacred obligations to their sovereign and their country. They, however, did become sensible, before it was too late, of the peril and the disgrace of the abyss into which they were about to plunge, and they recoiled from it. A golden bridge was made to enable them to return. To a great extent the quarrel had been a personal one with the Governor, Sir George Barlow, and the misguided officers were only too glad to make it appear to be wholly so. Therefore, when Lord Minto, the Governor-General, appeared personally on the scene the officers readily listened to his earnest appeals to their better feelings, and hastened to make to him the submission which they had refused to Sir George Barlow. The same indulgent moderation was shown—was shown wisely and successfully—to the folly of the European officers as had been shown to the delusion of the native Sepoys. The case was again dealt with as one of an epidemic madness, which had suddenly seized them. The officers had become conscious of their folly and their wickedness, and had found no sympathy. They were told by the highest and most esteemed military men, that the first duty of the army is submission to the civil power; and this painful episode in the history of the Company's army in Madras tended to strengthen and develope a sound public opinion in the universal body of their officers throughout all the Presidencies, which has probably rendered a repetition of such an outbreak impossible.

Lord Minto, like Lord Cornwallis and Sir George Barlow, had an honest and earnest desire to pursue

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the policy of peace, urged by the Directors and Proprietors, but the course of events could not be withstood.

It will be recollected that the Nizam and the Peshwa were submitted by the most stringent treaties to the British supremacy; but the other great powers, Scindiah, Holkar, and Berar, although much reduced and grievously mulcted by Lord Wellesley, had been left at the general peace still free and independent.

There were three groups of small states, the Rajhpoot states to the north-west, the Bundelcund states westward of the Jumna and the Ganges, and the Sikh states between the Sutlej and the British territory. There was also, it will be recollected, the protected state of the Guicowar; and lying between Scindiah, Holkar, and Berar was the small Mohammedan state of Bhopal. There were the armies which the Mahratta powers had gathered for the late war, which they could neither pay nor disband, nor control; and there was especially a great body of mercenaries, half-soldiers, half-freebooters, known as the Pindarees, ready to take service with any one against any one, sometimes living in all the licence of free quarters on the subjects of the prince in whose service they nominally were, but more frequently engaged in marauding excursions into the neighbouring states, into which they carried fire and sword. There was no horror which they did not inflict, no atrocity of which they were not guilty. The Bundelcund states and the Rajhpoot states were especially the victims of the Mahratta powers and the Pindaree bands. Of the Rajhpoot states there was one, Jeypoor, which the British were actually bound to protect by a treaty, the

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obligation of which the Calcutta Government evaded by asserting that the Rajah had not during the late war faithfully performed all the obligations on his part. Even the Court of Directors was ashamed of, and was constrained to rebuke, the pusillanimous abandonment of this prince to his powerful enemies. But independently of treaty obligations, the smaller states of Rajhpootana claimed the protection and interference of the British power on grounds the justice of which it is difficult, if not impossible, to controvert. There is a very striking despatch of Sir Charles Metcalfe, the Resident at Delhi, on this subject:—

"When I reply to these various applications, I find it difficult to obtain even a confession that the moderate policy of the British Government is just. People do not scruple to assert that they have a right to the protection of the British Government. They say that there always has existed some power in India to which peaceable states submitted, and in return obtained its protection. . . . The British Government now occupies the place of the great protecting power, and is the natural guardian of the peaceable and weak; but owing to its refusal to use its influence for their protection, the peaceable and weak states are continually exposed to the oppressions and cruelties of robbers and plunderers, the most licentious and abandoned of mankind."

If the accounts given of the Pindarees are at all to be relied on, nothing could be more dreadful than the position of the provinces exposed to their ravages.

"Before the Pindarees set out on an expedition, a leader sent notice to the inferior chiefs, and hoisted his standard. By rapid marches they reached some

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peaceful region, against which their expedition was intended. Terror and dismay burst at once on the helpless population; villages were seen in flames. The plunderers dispersed in small parties, and spread themselves over the face of the country. Acting on a concerted plan, they swept round in a half circle, committing every sort of violence and excess, torturing to extort money, ravishing, murdering, and burning in the defenceless villages, but seldom venturing into danger, unless the prospect of booty was very certain. When they approached a point on the frontier, very distant from where they had entered, they united, and went off in a body to their homes. There was no refinement of torture which they scrupled to resort to, in order to extort the discovery of the treasures which the ryots endeavoured to conceal from them."

Their ravages were chiefly confined to Malwa, Rajhpootana, and Berar, occasionally extending into the countries of the Peshwa and the Nizam, but for a time not venturing to provoke the British by attacks on their own subjects and territory.

The policy of abstention, under the plausible guise of moderation, was in fact a cruel and cowardly wrong. The power that Providence had given to the British, they were bound by every consideration of humanity, and by every motive of sound policy to exert for the suppression and extirpation of these enemies of the human race, and for the coercion of the powers by whom they were harboured. The principles of non-interference might as well be invoked to give impunity to the black flag of the pirate; and it is impossible to draw any sound dis-

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tinction between these land-robbers and the marauders on the high seas, whom it is the acknowledged duty of every civilized power to hunt down. In truth, the policy of non-intervention was soon found impossible by Lord Minto; and the Court of Directors was compelled, by the irresistible force of circumstances, to acquiesce in its abandonment by him, in the notable instances which we have now to record.

Runjeet Singh, who had established himself as the Sikh sovereign of Lahore, and had gradually subdued to his rule the Sikh chieftains and leaders to the north of the Sutlej, looked with covetous eyes on the Sikh states to the south of that river. He was a bold, ambitious, unscrupulous, and astute chief; and if he had been allowed to extend and consolidate his power on the British frontier, he would have been a most formidable neighbour, a standing menace and danger. The Sikhs were physically far superior to the natives of Hindostan, and constituted a religious sect which regarded military courage as the first virtue, and the use of arms as the great duty of every man initiated into their fraternity or Khalsa. The commonest instinct of self-preservation made the British Government feel that it would be impossible to permit the extension of Runjeet's power in their neighbourhood; they were obliged, therefore, to listen to the applications which came to them from all the Sikh chieftains of the Cis-Sutlej territory, and to take them under their protection.

Runjeet was warned that he could not be permitted to encroach. He chafed under the restraint; he remonstrated; he even protested against this as a violation of the amicable alliance between him and

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the British. He did not interfere between them and the Hindoo powers, and could not understand why they should interfere between him, a Sikh potentate, and the smaller Sikh chiefs, who were not British subjects or dependents. The British, however, were firm. Runjeet was made sensible of the risk he would incur by attempting the conquest of Sikhs, themselves as warlike as his own followers, if they were backed by the power of the British, the superiority of whose disciplined soldiers he was too sagacious not to appreciate. He came to an understanding with the British that he would, on his part, abstain from any further aggression in their direction, and that they would, on their part, confine their protection to the Cis-Sutlej chiefs, leaving him free to pursue his schemes of aggrandizement to the north and east.

Amicable relations were established, which have continued unimpaired to this day, with the Cis-Sutlej Sikh States, who accepted the protection, and willingly acknowledged the supremacy of the British. The latter undertook to abstain from all interference in their domestic affairs, but forbidding them all war between themselves or with their neighbours, and all external political relations, assumed the absolute power of determining all disputes and questions. With respect to the right of succession, the British eventually claimed as sovereigns paramount the right to succeed by lapse to any state in default of lawful heirs. The Sutlej thus became the northern frontier of British India.

Lord Minto found himself also compelled to interfere to restore peace and order in Bundelcund. Advice and remonstrances having been tried in vain, he at

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length announced his determination to put an end to the intestine wars of the rajahs, and to compel them to submit their disputes and claims to the final arbitrement and decision of the supreme power. Most of them submitted without a struggle, when they found that he was in earnest, but he was compelled, in several instances, to use force to coerce the more refractory of the chiefs. The story of Lord Minto's administration is filled with details of military operations in and near Bundelcund which, although not devoid of interest, and creditable to the British arms, did not result in any acquisition of territory. After some years of warfare the strongholds of the highland chiefs, the captains or patrons of the bands of marauders, in the most inaccessible fastnesses, were stormed; the most active leaders were, notwithstanding the rapidity of their movements, by persevering pursuit at last run down; and the most obstinate of the rajahs were compelled to submit to the control of the Government as the supreme power. Peace and order were at length restored to the distracted provinces of Bundelcund, under the recognized supremacy of the British.

In Holkar's dominions troubles also arose. There was a man of great fame in those days, Amir Khan, an Afghan soldier of fortune, a Mohammedan who had risen to be Holkar's principal captain, and who was at the head of an army, which Holkar could not pay and which had to provide for itself. This was done for a while by means of contributions levied from the neighbouring Rajhpootana princes and the pillage of their unfortunate subjects; but this resource exhausted, it became necessary to

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find other sources of plunder, and under pretence of some old claim of Holkar's against the Rajah of Berar, Amir Khan marched with an immense force into the states of the latter. He was joined by great numbers of Pindarees, and his army is said to have consisted of as many as 40,000 horse, and 24,000 of his Pindaree allies. The Rajah was unable to offer any effectual resistance, and Jubbulpore, one of his principal towns, and all the surrounding country fell into the power of Amir Khan.

Lord Minto was again compelled to interfere. He was, it is true, bound by no treaty to protect the Rajah of Berar, and on the other hand, Amir Khan, professing to act in the name of Holkar, insisted that the British were absolutely bound by treaty with the latter not to interfere between him and the Rajah of Berar. It was, however, felt by Lord Minto, and felt justly, that it was impossible "that an enterprising and ambitious Mussulman chief, at the head of a numerous army, irresistible by any power except that of the Company, should be permitted to establish his authority, on the ruins of the Rajah's dominions, over territories contiguous to those of the Nizam, with whom community of religion, combined with local power and resources, might lead to the formation of projects probably not uncongenial to the mind of the Nizam himself, and certainly consistent with the views and hopes of a powerful party in his court for the subversion of the British alliance."

Encouraged by the certainty of the British support, the Rajah now took heart to defend himself, and disavowed a treaty of submission which had been made by his general. In some battles which ensued, the

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predatory leader was defeated by the Rajah's own troops, and being made aware of the powerful forces which the English had assembled, was fain to withdraw from his enterprise and to return to the states of Holkar. Thus the mere demonstration of force by the Calcutta Government, and the certainty that the demonstration was serious and would be followed by action if necessary, were sufficient to save the Rajah of Berar from the imminent perils to which he was exposed.

In the territories of the Peshwa, too, the British were obliged to interfere peremptorily to prevent the Peshwa from crushing some Jaghirdars or chiefs, who were under their protection, and to compel them, on their side, to perform the obligations to which they were by their terms bound.

In the south serious disturbances in Travancore and Cochin had even earlier called for coercive measures by the Madras army. The quarrel originated in the alleged inability of these Courts to discharge their pecuniary obligations to the Company, which had fallen greatly into arrears. Their finances were in a state of deplorable disorder, and money was raised by the most ruinous and oppressive of expedients, the assignment of whole districts in farms to the money-lenders. The revolt or mutiny was soon put down, and the Courts were, happily for them, induced or coerced into the appointment of the British Resident, Colonel John Munro, as Dewan or Finance Minister, under whose administration the whole aspect of things was soon changed. Order succeeded to disorder, the revenue was largely increased, while the most oppressive burthens were removed, and in a few years the

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administration was restored to the hands of the native rulers, every debt discharged, the exchequer full, the revenue increasing and easily collected, and the country peaceful and prosperous.

Thus everywhere throughout India the policy of non-interference with the native states and people was found to be impossible, and the sincere and earnest resolution and effort to act upon it had only brought to the English danger and discredit, and to millions of natives evils which it is scarcely possible adequately to describe.

During Lord Minto's administration it became, moreover, necessary for the Indian Government to take part in the great struggle which was then pending between England and France. From the French colonies in the Asiatic seas the cruisers and privateers of France issued to prey on English commerce, and the Company itself suffered enormous losses from the capture of its ships laden with valuable cargoes. Expeditions were accordingly planned and conducted by the Governor-General, which resulted in the reduction of all the French and Dutch possessions in those seas. Some formidable pirates were also hunted out of nests in which they had lodged on the western coast; and a still more formidable body of corsairs were attacked in a stronghold on the Arabian coast, and destroyed.

The course of the narrative has brought us to an event of great importance in the history of the East India Company itself. In the year 1813 their parliamentary charter was renewed, and a fresh lease was given to them of their Indian dominions for a period of twenty years. They were compelled, however, by the public opinion of the commercial community of

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England to abandon their trade monopoly, with one great exception. It was resolved by the House of Commons and so enacted that the existing restraints respecting the commercial intercourse with China should be continued, and that the exclusive trade in tea should be preserved to the Company during the aforesaid period of twenty years.

Some plausible reasons were assigned for this, derived from the nature of the Chinese Government and the evils which might result from the probable collision between the Chinese authorities and the English adventurers, who might be tempted to resort to China; but the real and substantial reason was the representation of the Company, that the profits of their China trade were absolutely necessary to enable them to defray their territorial charges and pay their dividend of 600,000*l.* a year. Again, there was the singular spectacle exhibited of the English people, the people who are supposed to have been actuated by the meanest motives and impelled by cupidity and shop-keeping interests to steal the fair domains of the much-wronged sovereigns and princes of India, actually submitting themselves to an oppressive monopoly and a heavy taxation, in order to provide funds for the Indian exchequer for the protection and government of India. While taking upon themselves the burthen of this restraint on their own commerce with China, they gave the most unreserved freedom of trade to their Indian Empire itself, the ports of which were open to all shipping, and the ships of which might trade freely with the whole world.

In the same year, 1813, Lord Minto was recalled, to make way for the Marquis of Hastings. His

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administration had been in many respects successful and honourable, and although at its close the map of India showed no extension of the British frontiers, yet he had, as we have seen, done much to consolidate the influence of the British as the master power of India. He had also succeeded in converting an alarming deficit into a considerable surplus, and although the nominal capital of the debt was not diminished, the improved credit of the Indian exchequer had enabled him to reduce the charge for interest from 2,226,000*l.* to 1,537,000*l.* a year.

Before pursuing the narrative of the events by which the British power thus grew, we may pause for awhile to consider the principles by which an impartial historian ought to judge the conduct and motives of the men by whom the result was achieved. It is never to be forgotten that in the solution of the difficult and complicated problems, which the British statesmen, from Lord Wellesley's time down, have had to solve in India, there was really no selfish British interest involved. What was to be done, and what was done, by the Calcutta Government from time to time with the princes and people of Central India did not add, and could not add, a single farthing to the British exchequer, or one battalion or ship to the military strength of England, or any appreciable dignity to the royalty of the United Kingdom. The Calcutta Government is to be considered, in all that it had to do and all that it did, simply as an Indian government, bound to act solely with regard to its rights, its duties, and its obligations to its Indian subjects and to its Indian neighbours. It was an accident that the sovereignty was in the hands of an alien proconsul,

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holding office for a term of years through the selection of, and responsible to, certain English functionaries; but that accident did not affect the essential character of the sovereignty itself, the duties of which had to be fulfilled by the Governor-General. It was his right and his duty to do that, which it would have been right for a native hereditary sovereign to do, neither more nor less. The verdict of an impartial historian on the conduct of the successive Governors of India ought to be the verdict which an impartial foreigner would pronounce on a review of the same transactions, assuming them to have taken place between powers exclusively native, but powers acknowledging the same moral obligations, recognizing the same fixed distinctions between right and wrong, as those which a Christian ruler cannot be allowed to evade or transgress unblamed. An English writer of the story of India should endeavour to place himself in the position of an enlightened Bengalee, and have ever present to his mind this question:—Was that which was done by the Rulers of British India to the other rulers there, honestly, wisely, and properly done for the protection, security, and good of their own people, the people of India, whose trustees and guardians they were, without violating any principles of morality or rules of international obligation towards those other rulers or their people? The verdict on this issue will be as favourable to the honesty of their purpose as to its steadfast resoluteness.

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CHAPTER XI.

1813—1823. Marquis of Hastings. Nepaul. The Pindarees. Central India.

Lord Moira, afterwards Marquis of Hastings, arrived in India in the year 1813, and soon found that the political horizon was in every direction overcast. Wherever he looked there were thick black clouds, and the storms of war ready on all sides to burst. He was soon satisfied that it would be necessary to act, but it was long before he could obtain from England the necessary sanction, at last reluctantly given, to the vigorous and comprehensive policy, which, in accordance with the ablest and best-informed public servants in India, he considered the only policy of safety, as it was the only policy of honour to the British rulers in India. Lord Moira's administration did in the result complete and consolidate the edifice of empire which had been erected by Lord Wellesley on the foundations laid by Lord Clive. It was established in the time of Lord Moira, or rather, as it will be more convenient henceforth to call him, Lord Hastings, as the great rule of Indian public law, that throughout India, that is to say the whole of India within the Sutlej, the British rule was to be supreme. Not, of course, that it was arbitrary, or had a right to

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be capricious; it acknowledged itself bound in honour and good faith to the observance of all engagements, and to the respect of all rights of princes and all the rights and feelings of the people, but recognized thenceforth no equal. It claimed to be lord paramount over all the sovereigns and princes of the Peninsula, and made good its claim. The decisions of the Calcutta Government were, of course, liable to be reversed or modified by the authorities in England, but subject to that qualification to the *fiat* of the Governor-General, no potentate or prince in India had thenceforth any other answer than the Oriental response, "To hear is to obey."

Lord Hastings on arrival found the Government involved in a dispute with a power on the north-eastern frontier of India, which we have now for the first time to mention, the Goorka or Nepaulese Government. It is one of the many similar coincidences, that we come across in the course of our narrative, that this power in its origin and growth was nearly contemporary with the power of the British. About the middle of the eighteenth century, a small Goorka highland chief began a career of aggression and conquest, which was continued with uniform success by himself and his successors. There were, as respects the individuals, the usual incidents of an Eastern Court; usurped successions, disputed regencies, family intrigues and assassinations; but the Goorka power continued its course until it had subdued and consolidated the extensive but thinly-peopled territories constituting the kingdom of Nepaul. It was for the most part an Alpine country, extending over ten degrees of longitude along the water-shed of

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the Himalaya ranges, between Thibet and Hindostan; and the people, particularly the dominant Goorkas, were active, robust mountaineers of martial habits and great courage, self-confident and elate with long continued success.

In the course of their acquisitions they had made themselves masters of a very large tract of country below the mountains. The frontier was not defined. It happened that there were many villages, and many large tracts of country near the frontier, which were in this position. They were under the lordships of chiefs who were feudatories of more than one superior lord, feudatories of a lord whose territories had been annexed by the Nepaulese, and feudatories of a lord whose territories had become subject to the English or one of their dependents. There were, therefore, disputes as to these villages and tracts of country; and as will always happen to lowlanders in the neighbourhood of mountaineers, not restrained by a stable and settled government, the lowlands, undoubtedly British, were harassed by predatory bands descending from their fastnesses.

For several years the British contented themselves with remonstrances and reclamations. They really were very reluctant to engage in hostilities, which were likely to be perilous, sure to be very burthensome, and from which they anticipated no profit and little honour. They tried negotiation, and had recourse to commissioners to ascertain the titles to the disputed villages and to settle boundaries, but these efforts were vain; their moderation in truth only deceived the Nepaulese, who behaved with great arrogance, seizing the whole debateable ground and more, and

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expelling the British, not without slaughter, from districts of which the British authorities were in actual possession.

Lord Minto, just previous to his departure, had summoned them to withdraw, and had given them distinct notice that he should be obliged to use force, if necessary, to compel compliance with his just request. Lord Hastings was well aware that he had, in acting on this notice, to do what was excessively annoying to the authorities in England. It was easy to understand what was the real meaning of a despatch from home, expressing a confident hope, "that as the result of the local inquiries had satisfied you of the Company's right to the disputed lands, the Government of Nepaul would yield to your application for the surrender of those lands, without your being under the necessity of having recourse to more decided measures." That this was more than a hint not to have recourse to decided measures, was clearly understood by Lord Hastings, who had thus to excuse his disregard of it:—

"In this state I found things. I certainly had no option. I might shrink from the declaration plighted by Lord Minto, abandoning the property of the Company, sacrificing the safety of our subjects, and staining the character of our Government, or I had to act up to the engagements bequeathed to me, and to reprove the trespass of an insatiable neighbour. That I should have chosen the latter alternative will hardly afford ground for censure."

There was assuredly no ground for censure. The simple truth is, that the conflict might by a pusillanimous acquiescence in the wrong have been adjourned

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for awhile, but could never have been avoided. It is in the very nature of things that a government like the Nepaulese Government, acting under the counsels of uneducated, half-civilized highland chiefs, recognizing no law but that law of might which had made them prosperous and powerful, should be unable to understand a pacific policy, or to see in moderation anything but timidity and conscious weakness. They were of course as ready and willing if unchecked, to extend their aggressions over the British dominions, as over the dominions of their other neighbours. This was so true and so obvious, that, if the contrary were not certainly true, one might be almost tempted to think, that the long tried and patient endurance of the British under the aggressions of the Nepaulese was a piece of profound policy, acted with consummate skill to draw the latter on to such extravagant excesses as to justify the confiscation of their territory, which was the inevitable result of the collision.

Lord Hastings determined on coercive measures which he could no longer with honour or safety avoid, and sent in a force sufficient to recover the possession of the country, which had been seized by the Nepaulese. The Nepaulese on their side determined on war. The minutes of their council, in which they so resolved, fell into the hands of the English, and show no inconsiderable amount of talent as well as of resolution. To the arguments of the more prudent, who pointed out the great superiority of the British strength and resources, the war party replied by pointing out the natural strength of their mountains, in which they might defy invasion, and from which they could wage a war on the defenceless frontiers of their enemy, who

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would at length be wearied and worn out. They relied also, not unnaturally, on the probable chances in their favour of inducing the dissatisfied powers of India to rise behind the British and so make a powerful diversion in their favour; and they had hopes of drawing into the contest the Chinese, who had some kind of protecting power over Nepaul.

Lord Hastings did not underrate the magnitude of the enterprise he had undertaken. He saw that a defensive war in the disputed territory would give all the advantage of position to the Nepaulese, who could select at pleasure their points of attack and invasion on an open frontier-line of several hundred miles long, and that with all its difficulties an offensive war, carried into the Nepaulese mountains, was the only one which gave him a chance of bringing the campaign to a rapid and successful termination.

His preparations were therefore made on a great scale. He gathered together three several armies, amounting in the aggregate to more than twenty thousand regular soldiers; and he added to these large bodies of irregular troops levied for the occasion, and procured not only the alliance of the neighbouring ruler of Sihkim, a small principality on the east of Nepaul, but also the adhesion of some of the subject rajahs of the latter, who were willing enough to try a change of masters. The first operations of the campaign seemed to justify the confidence with which the Nepaulese had entered on the war. Great rashness and an undue contempt of the enemy caused the English to suffer very severe disasters, and two out of the three armies, with which they entered Nepaul, were signally and discreditably repulsed. The

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Sepoys were cowed and demoralized, and some even of the English commanders appear to have shown as much want of courage as want of conduct; but these disasters only showed the superiority which a great power like the English, with a large disciplined army, must have in the long-run over mountaineers, however brave, and whatever the natural strength of their fastnesses. To such a power the disasters could only be temporary checks, like those which the armies of Napoleon suffered from the Tyrolese mountaineers. The temporary triumphs, however elating they might be, did not give the Nepaulese the resources or the means of organizing an army fit for a great campaign outside their mountains.

On the other side, the British had fresh commanders and fresh officers to take the places of those whose unfitness had been demonstrated, and fresh soldiers to assist those who had failed. If a gallant officer fell, "there were five hundred good as he." If there were mistakes made, they were avoided on the next occasion. The actual loss of life was never sufficiently great materially to diminish the resources of the British power in men, and the worst that could happen would be a second or a third campaign; even that was fortunately not necessary. One army under General Ochterlony was well and happily conducted; strong positions were assaulted and taken when necessary, and turned when practicable; the Sepoys, elsewhere disheartened and demoralized, here under a commander who inspired confidence, maintained their character. The defeat of the best general and best army of the Goorkas by Ochterlony, and the capture of some of the strongest forts on the extreme

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west, more than counterbalanced the successes of the enemy in the other parts of the Goorka country.

The country of Kumaon, adjoining Nepaul, which had been subdued by the Nepaulese, was ascertained to be ill-affected. A Lieutenant-Colonel Gardner was therefore authorized to raise and command a body of irregulars for the invasion of this province, which was with little difficulty overrun and annexed by the British. This is another illustration of a resource, which has never failed the British in an emergency in India. Any number of irregular troops can be raised with ease for their service amongst the most martial of the Indian peoples. A popular leader, with a liberal supply of rupees from the Calcutta treasury, can at all times draw to his standard as many faithful and attached troopers as he chooses to raise. His only limit is the amount of his credit on the exchequer, and under an active partisan such irregular troops have generally been found most useful.

Notwithstanding the checks, the disasters, and even the disgrace which in some instances befell the British arms, and notwithstanding the undoubted courage which was displayed by the Nepaulese, they were made to feel in one campaign the hopelessness of the struggle, and they agreed to the terms of peace dictated by the British. A temporary change of counsels at Khatmandoo, the capital of Nepaul, for a while suspended the ratification of the treaty, and General Ochterlony had not only to prepare, but actually to begin a second campaign in the beginning of 1816; but it was scarcely entered on before the rulers of Nepaul were convinced of the hopelessness of the struggle. They were glad to ratify the treaty, even

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with the further cession of some additional territory, which had been overrun in the interval. By the treaty of peace which was then made, and which has been maintained without breach on either side or any interruption of friendship ever since, the province of Kumaon up to the sources of the Ganges on the crest of the Himalayas, and the belt of country lying on the low lands along the length of Nepaul called the Terai, were ceded to the English; and the Nepaulese abandoned all claim over the Hill States between Kumaon and the Sutlej, which thenceforth passed under British protection. The Nepaulese consented also with great reluctance to the admission of a Resident at their Court; for in India the presence of a British Resident is regarded as the mark of British superiority, as the presence of a person who claims a right to obtrude his advice and counsels, and to intimate the wishes of his masters, and may easily become the centre of a powerful faction at the Court.

Lord Hastings, having brought to a prosperous issue his war with the Nepaulese, and extorted from the English authorities their approbation of his policy, and of the measures by which he had successfully carried it out, was now enabled to turn his attention to the devastations of the province of Rajhpootana by the Pathan soldiers, nominally in the pay of Holkar, to the devastations of Central India by the Pindarees, and to the encroachments continued to be made by the great Mahratta powers on the smaller states. It is unnecessary, and it would be tedious and difficult, to attempt to give any details of the distracted state of Rajhpootana and Central India, or of the sufferings endured by the people. The princes of the former

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were subject to continual extortions and indignities, and their provinces were annually overrun by the predatory bands under Amir Khan and his fellows. Central India was more exposed to the Pindarees properly so called. Although these men were, in truth, bands of freebooters, they had a kind of political status and a certain bond of alliance between themselves. Certain of their leaders had recognized places of pre-eminence, and had fortresses, fastnesses, and territories, principally within the dominions of Scindiah. They appear to have been regarded with some favour by the greater Mahratta powers, as forces who might in emergency prove valuable auxiliary troops. It was, therefore, not without some reason apprehended, that the interference of the British to repress them, that is, to extirpate them as organized bands, would be regarded with jealousy by the Mahrattas, and might lead to another Mahratta war, a contingency which was viewed with great dread in England.

The Court of Directors, that is to say, Mr. Canning, the then President of the Board of Control, wrote thus, in 1816:—

"We are unwilling to incur the risk of a general war for the uncertain purpose of extirpating the Pindarees. Extended political and military combinations we cannot at the present moment sanction or approve. We entertain a strong hope that the dangers which arise from both these causes (i. e. the suspicious behaviour of certain of the Mahratta chieftains, and the daring movements of the Pindarees), and which must, perhaps, always exist in a greater or less degree, may, by a judicious management of our existing relations, be prevented from coming upon us in a very

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formidable force; while on the other hand, any attempt at this moment to establish a new system of policy, tending to a wider diffusion of our power, must necessarily interfere with those economical regulations which it is more than ever incumbent on us to recommend . . . . and may too probably produce or mature those very projects of hostile confederacy which constitute the chief object of your apprehension."

A previous despatch had positively enjoined the Government of Bengal from undertaking anything which might embroil them with Scindiah, or make any material change in the existing system of political relations.

The Home Government had even gone so far as to suggest, as an easier expedient, that it might be practicable to take advantage of the dissensions among the Pindarees themselves, and neutralize them by setting one leader against another; to which the Governor-General's sarcastic reply was, "I am roused to the fear that we have been culpably deficient in pointing out to the authorities at home the brutal and atrocious qualities of these wretches. Had we not failed to describe sufficiently the horror and execration in which the Pindarees are held, I am satisfied that nothing could have been more repugnant to your feelings, than the notion that this Government should be soiled by a procedure which was to bear the colour of confidential intercourse on a common cause with any of those gangs."

In the meantime, the Pindarees themselves had taken good care to compel the British to act. At the end of 1815 they carried off a valuable booty from Masulipatam. The next March they reappeared

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in greater numbers, and for a series of ten days spread themselves in different directions over the districts of Gantur, Cuddapah, and Masulipatam, moving rapidly, at the rate of thirty or forty miles a day, and finally retiring without loss, and with their booty, having in this short time plundered about 300 villages, wounded and tortured nearly 4000 individuals, and murdered nearly 200. The success of this inroad led to several more attacks on the British territories, marked by the same atrocities, but not altogether attended with like impunity; while territories under British protection were visited still more frequently, with greater audacity, and with like atrocities. The impossibility of permanently guarding against these predatory inroads by a system purely defensive, thus received that practical demonstration which, strange to say, was needed by the Home Government. How could it ever have been doubted, that the only course with pirates and banditti is to follow them to their haunts, and extirpate them?

At length the Governor-General received from home a reluctant permission to act upon his own judgment. The former instructions were not (it was said) intended to restrain the Governor-General in the exercise of his judgment and discretion, upon any occasion when actual war upon the British territories might be commenced by any body of marauders, and where the lives and property of British subjects might call for efficient protection; and the Governor-General was further authorized to act with regard to the possible contingency of a connexion, open or secret, between Scindiah, Holkar, and the Pindarees, of a nature hostile to the British Government.

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Lord Hastings appears to have put a very liberal interpretation on the letter of these permissive despatches, and to have considered that he was now authorized by their spirit to act upon his own notions of the policy which the safety and honour of the British Government in India required, and which was in his view imposed on the British rulers by the plainest obligations of duty. This policy was the establishment of general tranquillity throughout India, under the supremacy of the British Government.

The change of the British policy was hardly announced when its effects began to be felt throughout India. All the small states eagerly availed themselves of the opportunity, and sent envoys to solicit the alliance and protection, which the Calcutta Government had been hitherto prevented by the positive prohibition of the home authorities from entering into and giving. The Nawab of Bhopal now renewed an application, to which the Government had been before constrained to turn a deaf ear; and what was perhaps the most striking testimony to the propriety of the new system, even Amir Khan, the leader of Holkar's army, offered to come into the general alliance and disband his troops, if he were guaranteed in the possession of the territory which he had appropriated as his own lordship.

The Holkar of our history, Jeswunt Rao, had some years previously become mad and died. The nominal sovereign was a child, and the state was distracted by the quarrels, pretensions, usurpations and crimes of the female regent and her paramours on the one hand, and rebellious chiefs and mutinous generals on the other; the usual and normal incidents of a native court during a minority.

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Scindiah was still at the head of his dominions, and was of course dissatisfied, and deeply mortified by the results of the Mahratta war, which had left him weakened and humiliated. He was, moreover, always suspicious of the English; he always feared that they contemplated still further encroachments on what he deemed his rights; in his own language, a man might accustom himself to go into a tiger's den, but he could never forget that it was a tiger in whose company he was. He was also naturally of an ambitious and of an intriguing disposition. It was not surprising, therefore, that the British Government should have obtained conclusive proofs of his persistent intrigues against them with the Nepaulese, with Runjeet Singh, with the Peshwa, and with the Rajah of Berar, all directed to the end of re-establishing the Mahratta Empire, which had been shattered by the events of the last war.

The Peshwa was still more dissatisfied. Although a mere fugitive and his fortunes desperate when the British espoused his cause, he owed them no gratitude for services for which they had exacted their own price, and he was not the less disposed to chafe under the restrictions of the treaties, which had deprived him of the supreme rank as chief of the whole Mahratta confederacy, and had, in truth, annihilated the power and dignity of the Peshwaship. He, too, was longing for an opportunity to indulge his hostility to his intrusive protectors, and to recover so far as he could his lost authority.

The actual Rajah of Berar, Appa Sahib, the other great Mahratta prince, apparently owed everything to the British. He had entirely through their influence

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and support assumed the regency on the accession of his infant nephew; and on that nephew's sudden death he was by the same influence and support enabled himself to ascend the Musnud as reigning Rajah. It is to be hoped, that the British were not then aware, that the sudden death which had opened the succession to him, was in truth a murder by him of his ward. In his heart he, too, hated the British.

As to all these princes, even if some feelings of prudence and interest operated on them personally to induce them to maintain relations of alliance and amity with the British power, the persons by whom they were surrounded, their harems, their courts, their generals and great nobles, were from patriotic feelings in some, and pride of race and caste in all, bitterly hostile to the intrusive infidels. They lived in an atmosphere of hatred, and were impelled by the counsels and public opinion of those around them to go, not indeed against their own wishes, but often beyond them, in their schemes against the British authority.

This state of feeling in the Mahratta courts of India explains how it came to pass that the British measures against the Pindarees produced a general war, and led to the momentous results which we have to narrate. Nothing could be more legitimate cause for war than the outrages of the Pindarees; the very existence of such a body of men, in any country, under any government, would, by all the laws of nations and of war, that is to say, by all the laws of common sense and ordinary morality, justify any state injured by them in the extremest measures of war, and the utmost rights of conquest against such country and government.

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Any assistance, favour, or countenance, given to them by any state, would be by the same laws, legitimate cause for war and for the exaction of the penalties of war against the offending state. Nothing could be, therefore, more legitimate, as there was nothing more necessary, than the enterprise about to be undertaken by the British against the hordes of marauders; and nothing could be more clear than the duty, on general grounds of international obligation, of the Mahratta powers, if not to aid, at least not to impede that enterprise. Yet on very obvious considerations, it was very natural that the Mahratta powers should not so regard the state of things which had arrived in India. They were not quite reconciled in the present to the overshadowing power of the British; nor were they wholly satisfied, as to the future, of the moderation or good faith of the latter.

No power or person in India had ever abstained, except from want of strength, from seizing the country of any other power or person; and the Mahratta states not unnaturally apprehended that their day was only postponed, until the British tiger was hungry enough and strong enough to make the fatal spring upon them. They felt instinctively that the new or renewed policy, which the British were now about to act on, must result in a great addition to their power and influence. A power which could annihilate the Pindarees, and could throw its protecting shield alike over the Rajahs of Bundelcund, the Hill and Sikh states, and Rajhpootana would, it was felt, be too powerful thenceforth to be resisted. The doctrines and notions of the balance of power were not unknown to the Mahratta princes and their counsellors. They

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were those in fact on which the alliance against Tippoo had been made; on which the war against Holkar and his allies had proceeded. The appeal of one of the Pindaree chiefs to Scindiah, "What, if we are destroyed, will become of you?" was an appeal to a well understood feeling in every Mahratta breast. It was very natural, therefore, that hostile designs should be entertained and intrigues worked unceasingly against the British at the Mahratta Courts. There was also amongst the Mahratta military leaders something of a national feeling, an *esprit de corps*, a desire to see the old flag of the Mahratta Empire again unfolded by the Peshwa or some other chief as the rallying standard of the Mahrattas.

The outbreak against the English began rather unexpectedly and prematurely at Poonah, the capital of the Peshwa; and as the chief result of the warlike operations that followed was the entire destruction of his sovereignty and the absorption of the greater part of his dominions, it will be necessary to follow the course of the incidents in some detail.

The Peshwa, Bajee Rao, had as his minister Trimbuckjee Dainglia, a man who had risen from a menial office to the position of favourite and confidential adviser of his sovereign. He appears to have been unscrupulous, as was the character of the country and the times, but was a man of great ability and energy, and seems to have served his master zealously and well. A Mahratta himself, and the servant of the Mahratta Peshwa, he was earnest and eager in the prosecution of his hostile schemes and the attempt to form a general combination of the native powers against the British. He had so managed the finances of the

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country, that the Peshwa was supposed to have accumulated treasure to the vast amount (very vast having regard to the then value of money) of 5,000,000*l.* sterling. The Peshwa with this resource, was able to levy, and began to levy, considerable armed forces; but he appears at first to have deceived the English general, Sir John Malcolm, by his professions of satisfaction with, and adhesion to, the English alliance, and his statements that the forces were being raised for the purpose of co-operating against the Pindarees.

The mine was skilfully laid, but it exploded too soon. Amongst the Courts which the Peshwa or his minister desired to detach from the British side, was that of the Guicowar; and under the pretence of settling some pecuniary demands upon the latter, which had long been in question, Trimbuckjee contrived that a minister or envoy from the Guicowar should repair to Poonah, so as to dispose of the matter in personal conference. Shastree was the envoy so sent, but he required and received the pledged word of the British Resident, Mountstuart Elphinstone, for his safety, before he placed himself in the power of the Peshwa's minister. After a time Trimbuckjee succeeded in cajoling Shastree and bringing him over to his schemes. The Guicowar was to make considerable cessions to the Peshwa; but by way of compensation there was to be a matrimonial alliance between the family of the latter and the family of Shastree. The Guicowar, however, refused his assent to the cession to be made by him; and the Peshwa, not getting his price, broke off the matrimonial alliance which was to have been Shastree's remuneration. There seem also to have been some other personal quarrels or matters of offence between the Peshwa

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and Shastree, arising, it is said, out of the latter's refusal to permit his wife to be contaminated by the orgies of the Court.

The exact motive of the next proceeding taken by the Peshwa and his minister is difficult to divine. It is difficult to see what advantage could have been anticipated from it, or whether there was anything more in it than the gratification of a passion for revenge, which every now and then appears to have an irresistible fascination for the Hindoo mind. However that was, the assassination of Shastree was resolved on, and was perpetrated, under circumstances of great treachery, during a religious festival, to which he had been specially invited to accompany the Peshwa and his minister. The English Resident, whose word had been pledged for the envoy's safety, lost no time in a searching inquiry into the matter, and in obtaining conclusive proofs against the sovereign and his minister. The English insisted, as the least reparation that could be exacted, that Trimbuckjee should be removed from power, and delivered into their custody. The Peshwa felt himself constrained to yield under the pressure of a British force, which the Resident caused to be brought to Poonah, stipulating only that the life of his favourite should be spared. Trimbuckjee was accordingly confined in the fort of Tannah, in the island of Salsette, from which in a short time he contrived, by the aid of some faithful friends outside, to effect his escape. The story of his escape is rendered interesting, from the way in which a Mahratta friend or servant contrived to be employed as groom to an English officer, and to take his horses out for exercise under the windows of the prison, singing

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snatches of Mahratta songs as he pursued his task. These snatches were, in fact, the messages from the outside, giving the prisoner information of the plans for his escape, and directions for his guidance. Contriving to leave a long figure in his bed, Trimbuckjee descended from his room, and in the disguise of a labourer, which had been deposited for him, walked boldly past the unsuspicious English sentry at the gates. He found a troop of friends waiting for him, and soon placed himself beyond the reach of pursuit.

Arrived in the territories of the Peshwa, he began to levy troops ostensibly on his own account, and in defiance of the orders of his sovereign, who affected to consider him as a rebel. It was, however, well ascertained that Trimbuckjee was acting throughout in concert with the Peshwa, had an interview with him, and was supplied by him with the requisite funds for raising men. The Governor of Bombay in Council, determined that he had placed himself in the position of an enemy, and that it was necessary to deal with him accordingly. The Peshwa's preparations were not in his judgment sufficiently advanced, or his heart failed him at the time; and he yielded against the passionate remonstrances of his ablest chief, Gokla, who warmly urged him to strike a manly blow for the honour of himself and the Mahrattas.

The English exacted, by way of reparation and security, the terms of a new treaty, the Treaty of Poonah, on the 13th of June, 1817, by which, in lieu of the contingent force to which he was bound by the Treaty of Bassein, he was to give the British themselves the means of maintaining a like force by the cession to them of territories and tributes. He

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was to cede the fortress of Ahmednuggur, all his claims on Bundelcund and Malwa, and on the chiefs to the north of the Nerbudda. He was to abstain from all interference in the affairs of Hindostan, and his claims upon the Guicowar were fixed at a small annual sum. To these terms were added a declaration acknowledging the dissolution of the Mahratta confederacy, and a renunciation of all authority and claims as the executive head of that empire, and a stipulation that the Peshwa would maintain no agent at any other Court, and receive none from any other Court. These were hard terms. The hardest, doubtless, was the loss of the Imperial dignity, the exaction of which reminds us of the dissolution of the Germanic Empire, and the relinquishment of the imperial power by Austria. The English obtained thereby the removal of a formidable danger; but their own immediate acquisitions by the treaty were inconsiderable, consisting mainly in the substitution of territory for the right to the maintenance of a contingent force at the Peshwa's expense.

This treaty left the Peshwa in possession substantially of the whole of the dominions which were actually and immediately under his rule, and deprived him only of uncertain and disputed claims upon other princes, and of that equally uncertain power, which was with very capricious allegiance acknowledged tby he Mahrattas as annexed to the Peshwaship,—an office, usurped, as we have seen, from the legitimate representative of the Mahratta sovereign, and liable, as we have seen, to be usurped in its turn by any successful adventurer like Holkar, or an ambitious chief like Scindiah.

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It was not in the nature of things that the Peshwa should contentedly acquiesce in the lowered and subordinate position to which he was reduced by the Treaty of Poonah, or be content with the mere sovereignty of the dominions which were left to him, although they were larger and more populous than most European kingdoms at that time. He affected for a while, however, to be resigned to the new state of things, and continued to assemble troops ostensibly for the purpose of acting in concert with the British against the Pindarees.

By the month of October, in the same year in which the treaty was signed, he had got together a very considerable force of horse and foot at Poonah. His captains shared his feelings of hatred to the English, and he had reason to believe that the Rajah of Berar was ready to seize the first favourable opportunity to restore the Mahratta power, and to shake off what was felt to be a humiliating yoke. His emissaries had been very busy with the native troops in the service of the British, and had spent large sums of money in the promotion of their schemes. Many of the officers and men took the bribes, but kept their masters informed of the intrigues that were going on. The Peshwa, not aware of this, was deluded into the belief that his practices had been successful, and fondly hoped that when the time arrived to strike the blow, there would be a wholesale desertion of the Sepoys to his standard. The British Resident was meanwhile well instructed as to the plot that was forming, and warned General Smith, the commander of the Bombay army, one of the armies prepared for the combined operations contemplated against the

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Pindarees. It was arranged that any interruption of the communications between the Residency and the army, should be a signal for the latter to march on Poonah. The force actually under the Resident consisted only of three battalions and two companies of regular troops (Sepoys), and one battalion of the Peshwa's own soldiers, officered by the English. The Resident received information, corroborated by many unmistakable signs, that it was intended to attack the Residency, and took the precaution to remove his force to a position two miles from Poonah. A regiment of Bombay European infantry, and some detachments of artillery, and of a native regiment, had just joined him, and another battalion, with a body of horse, 1000 strong, was on its way still further to reinforce him.

The troops of the Peshwa placed themselves in a menacing attitude, and in answer to a demand from the Resident that they should be withdrawn and proceed to the frontier, a counter-demand was made by the Peshwa, that the European regiment should march on, the other force be restored to its usual strength, and the cantonments be placed where he should point out. These demands left no doubt of the hostile intentions of the Peshwa. The Resident left the Residency for the camp, and the Mahrattas immediately entered, plundered, and burnt the former.

With a force of 10,000 cavalry, and 10,000 infantry, and a powerful artillery, the Mahratta army, threatened the small force of the British, which did not exceed 3000 men. The Resident and Colonel Burr, the commandant, felt that delay might be fatal; that to await for reinforcements in a defensive atti-

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tude would be to give greater audacity to the Mahrattas, and bring probably large numbers to their standard, while it was by no means certain that under the discouragement of such a position, the Sepoys might not fail and listen to the temptations to desert, by which they were beset.

Notwithstanding the disparity of the forces an immediate attack was ordered, and after some hard fighting the Mahrattas withdrew in disorder from the field. The next day the expected reinforcements arrived and the immediate danger was over. The defeat, however, had not been anything like a rout, and the Mahratta army was still in force a few miles off. General Smith found from the interruption of his communications that the anticipated outbreak had occurred, and promptly proceeded with his army to Poonah. The Peshwa with his army fled, leaving his capital Poonah to the conqueror, and, for several months, accompanied by his general, Gokla, and his minister, Trimbuckjee, moved hither and thither before the English, who had an arduous pursuit but no further military difficulty. He was occasionally brought to bay and defeated, but escaped, protected by his horse, who guarded him in his successive flights from the pursuing enemy.

In the course of this chase the whole army of the Peshwa, amounting to 25,000 men, fell in on one occasion with a small body of the British, consisting of one battalion of infantry, three hundred irregular horse, and two six-pounders manned by twenty-four Europeans. It was at daybreak that, after a long night's march, this small force found itself in presence of the vast army of the Peshwa. They gallantly took up a

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position in which for the entire day they withstood and repulsed the successive assaults of the enemy, which were directed by the Peshwa in person and his general and minister. At nightfall the Mahrattas made a precipitate retreat. This incident in the monotonous hunt of the Peshwa, is called the defence of Corigaum.

The chase still continued; towns were occupied, fortresses taken in succession; and the fortunes of the Peshwa became more and more desperate. His dethronement by the British was announced in a proclamation, setting forth the breach of faith and unprovoked aggressions by which he had brought on himself this merited penalty. It was also announced that the Rajah of Sattara, the legitimate Mahratta sovereign who had been kept in guard by the Peshwa, but had fallen into the hands of the British, should be placed on the Musnud as actual sovereign of such of the states of the Peshwa as the British did not think it right to annex to their own dominions. At length the Peshwa, tired of his fugitive life, proposed to Sir John Malcolm to surrender, and obtained from him terms, the liberality of which was much blamed by the Governor-General, who however felt himself bound by them. He was to cede all his territories and sovereign rights of every description, but was to retain all the treasure which he had still preserved out of his large hoards, and was to have a pension of eight lacs of rupees per annum, but was henceforth to reside in such place in the British territories as should be assigned to him for that purpose. This was settled by the beginning of June, 1818. In one short year after the Treaty of Poonah, the Peshwa had brought himself to utter ruin, and had pulled down with him the whole fabric of Mahratta

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power in Central India. The ease with which this colossal edifice was broken to pieces showed how slight were its foundations. It was not based on the interests or the feelings of the people, and had no support but in the interests, the passions, the pride and prejudices of a few princes and their immediate chiefs, captains, and ministers.

In the same ruin the Peshwa involved Appa Sahib, the Rajah of Berar. He had been induced to enter into the schemes of the Poonah Court, and was not deterred by the misfortunes of the latter from provoking a conflict with the power which they had come to regard as a common foe. The events which happened at Nagpore seem almost a stereotyped copy of those which had, as we have seen, taken place at Poonah. The Resident was warned of the intention to attack the Residency and the cantonments, and removed the troops to a position of some strength on the neighbouring heights of Seetabaldee. The whole British force did not number more than 1350. This small force was attacked by the Rajah's army 18,000 strong, including 4000 Arab mercenaries, men at that time much in request and much esteemed by the Mahrattas for their martial qualities, and the Rajah was exceedingly strong in cavalry and artillery. There was a hostile movement of the troops of the Rajah towards the English, but there was apparently hesitation, and there were divided counsels; for two ministers of the Rajah were in actual conference with the British Resident when the firing began. The Arab mercenaries were, it would seem, determined that there should be a fight, and cut short all negotiations by commencing to fire without wait-

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ing for orders. The fighting, which began late in the day, closed at night with small results, but on the whole rather favourably to the attacking party.

At sunrise on the 27th of November, 1817, the diminutive British army saw before them the large masses of the Mahratta cavalry, with strong bodies of infantry and a numerous and heavy artillery, and had immediately to receive the vigorous attacks of the Arabs, who were bold and active. For several hours the fight was hot, and the fortune of the day was going against the British, who had even lost one of their positions, and were thrown into some confusion by the explosion of a tumbril, when a movement bold almost to rashness changed the whole aspect of the battle. The small body of the British cavalry was under Captain Fitzgerald, who according to one account acted against orders, according to another under a permission reluctantly wrung to act on his own responsibility. He made a sudden dash from his position, broke through the Mahratta cavalry, dispersed them, captured some guns, cut to pieces a body of infantry that was moving to their support, and rode back safely in triumph to his lines. At this critical moment an accident similar to that which had disconcerted the defenders happened to their assailants. There was an explosion of ammunition, which produced great disorder in the ranks of the Arabs; the British made a sudden rush against the latter, who were driven headlong down the hill, and in their attempt to rally were routed by a charge of cavalry. The complete rout of the Arabs determined the day, and by noon the British had won the decisive victory of Seetabaldee.

No further attempt was made by the Mahrattas, and

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by the 12th of December, General Doveton had arrived with reinforcements. The Rajah was forthwith summoned to deliver up his guns and military stores, to disband his Arabs and other troops without delay, to allow Nagpore his capital to be occupied, and to repair himself to the Residency. While a formal treaty embodying the terms was being negotiated, it was ascertained that the Rajah was in correspondence with the governors of forts and others, giving them secret orders to continue their resistance to the British, and that he had caused the murder of his predecessor. The negotiations were broken off, and a new Rajah, an infant, the next of kin, was placed on the Musnud under the regency of his mother, the administration to be subject to the Resident until the prince should be old enough to assume himself the government, and so Berar was pacified.

The other great Mahratta power, Scindiah, had also been in correspondence and concert with the Peshwa, and was also willing enough to thwart the projects of the Governor-General against the Pindarees; but luckily for him, the position and strength of the armies, which the Governor-General had collected for his enterprise, were such as at the very outset to convince Scindiah of the hopelessness of any contest with the British. The Governor-General had a very large army in four great divisions, under himself as commander-in-chief, posted in various positions along the line of the Jumna. There was on the south, the army of the Deccan from Madras, in position along the line of the Nerbudda; and there was on the Bombay side a strong force which was to operate from Guzerat. The aggregate of the forces thus put in motion or in reserve

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amounted to no less than 113,000 troops, with 300 pieces of ordnance. Lord Hastings' first step was to move his troops into a position which gave him the command of the capital and army of Scindiah, and the latter felt that he had no alternative but to sign the treaty which was presented to him for his acceptance. By this treaty of the 6th of November, 1817, he became bound to co-operate with the British against the Pindarees, to give them no shelter, and to seize and deliver up their leaders; and the British were to have during the war possession of his forts. Notwithstanding the reluctance with which Scindiah entered into this treaty, his continued sympathies with the Peshwa, and his secret encouragement to some of his governors and captains who continued their resistance to the British, this treaty in fact secured the prompt success of the campaign.

The homes of the Pindarees were soon taken and occupied. The larger body of them, under their great chiefs, Wasil Mohammed and Kurreem Khan, sought to make their way to Gwalior, where they expected to be received and supported by Scindiah, but were forestalled by the measures which Lord Hastings had taken; finding themselves cut off in this direction they fled, some westward and some southward, but could not escape some one or other of the encircling forces. In their flight they were exposed everywhere to the vengeance of the villagers, and in a short time were annihilated or dispersed.

The only other considerable body, under the third of their great leaders, Cheetoo, found their way into the territories of Holkar. Here they found congenial spirits and active support in the Pathan soldiers of the

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latter. The sovereign himself was a child, under a female regent, whose paramour was at the head of the administration, such as it was; but their sincerity in the cause of the Pindarees was doubted, and the Pathan soldiers murdered the regent and established a new regency of their own. Thereupon Sir Thomas Hislop was ordered to march against the combined armies of Holkar and Cheetoo, and on the 21st of December, 1817, fought and won the battle of Mahidpore. This led to the submission of Holkar's Government; and Cheetoo's Pindarees, flying from one army of the British, fell into the hands of another, found no refuge or halting-place, and were at length, like the other bands, destroyed or dispersed. A few of the leaders received small estates, and their followers were absorbed into the agricultural population, and are said many of them to have taken cordially and successfully to their new pursuits. Cheetoo himself is said to have fallen a victim to a tiger in a jungle, where he had sought shelter, and where some remains of his were years afterwards found and recognized. Although the ultimate dispersion of all the bands, and the reduction of all the forts over the vast extent of country subjugated, necessitated a continuance of a desultory warfare for many months, substantially the desired results were obtained in one campaign, short in its duration, but ranging over an almost unexampled extent of area.

The aggregate of the accessions as the result of this war was not less than from 45,000 to 50,000 square miles; but the increased territory acquired by the British was not the principal gain nor the chief revolution produced by the wars which

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grew out of the enterprise against the Pindarees. Not only was the Mahratta confederacy for ever broken, but all dominion of any state except the British over any other state in India was by the new treaties and arrangements entirely abrogated, and every claim or pretence for aggression or interference, was for ever disposed of. With the exception of Scindiah, all the greater powers had placed themselves under the obligations of a subsidiary treaty, and all the smaller ones were placed by treaties under the protection of the British. The long bead-role of the treaties and arrangements which were made with the British between November 1st, 1817, and December 25th, 1818, some with states of considerable magnitude, shows how ready the princes of India were, after the experience of the few preceding years, to submit to the supremacy and to enjoy the protection of the British power. Lord Hastings had, in fact, completely realized his great and grand scheme of policy, the complete establishment of peace between all the powers and princes of India, under the acknowledged supremacy of the British Government, as the supreme and imperial arbiter. The ease with which so great a revolution was effected throughout the whole of Central India, is probably the shortest and strongest proof of its propriety. No such change could have been effected by such means over such an area in such a time unless it had been required, nor unless with the acquiescence and assent of the people. The mere narrative of the events in their sequence of time suffices to show that the policy of Lord Hastings was sound and good. The necessity under which he commenced to act against the Pindarees was imperative,

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his objects legitimate, his counsels prudent, and it is certain that he never desired the hostilities into which he was forced by the Mahratta powers, nor the territorial acquisitions and changes which were the natural result.

These great military operations, moreover, had been carried on, and changes effected without any drain on England, or on the Company. In the ten years between 1813 and 1823, over which Lord Hastings's administration extended, the nominal amount of the funded and floating debts had been increased by about 5,600,000*l.*; but the cash balances and the other available assets of the Government had been in the meanwhile increased to a very much larger amount. There had been little loss of life in the British armies in the campaign except, indeed, from the cholera, which broke out for the first time during this period.

That the condition of the people transferred to the British rule was greatly improved is indisputable. The relations between such a Government as the Mahratta and the cultivators of the soil, who were the people of the country, were simply the right of the former to receive the land revenue, and the right of the latter to cultivate, subject to the obligation to pay that revenue. Their usual course was to maintain troops, and to raise money by assignment of the revenue of entire districts to the commanders of the troops, and to the persons who had made loans; and even in districts not so assigned the revenues were generally farmed out to contractors, and subfarmed often through several hands. The persons to whom the revenue was assigned or farmed, were absolute masters in their

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districts, and nothing could be more lamentable than the state to which the poor ryots were reduced by the exactions of their oppressions. The mere abolition of this system by the British was an incalculable benefit, was, in fact, a revolution, which made the ryots under British rule free men.

The effect on the states, which still remained under native rule, of the cessation of intestine wars and the destruction of the predatory bands, may best be understood from two examples—Holkar's territory and Rajhpootana. The rule of the reduced dominions of the young Holkar had been entrusted to an able and honest minister, and the following is the description given of its progress under the new régime :—

"It was soon raised to a degree of prosperity which it had not experienced when of less circumscribed extent. Hundreds of villages which had been left desolate were re-peopled, and the peasantry, in following the plough, were no longer obliged to bear spear and shield for their defence. The mercenary troops were greatly reduced, and the expenses of the Courts regulated. In the course of a year the revenue was raised from a nominal amount of four lacs of rupees, the whole of which was anticipated by assignment in favour of the military marauders, to fourteen lacs, and continued to improve until the death of the minister in 1826, when it amounted to thirty-five lacs of rupees."

Of Joudpoor, one of the large Rajhpoot states, which had previously suffered so much from the aggressions of Holkar and the military adventurers, the following description is given :—

"In 1817, the royal lands returned scarcely a yearly

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sum of 3000 rupees; in 1821 they yielded about eleven lacs. The inhabited houses of the capital increased in the same period from 3000 to 10,000. Bhelwana, which had been a populous town of 12,000 families, and had latterly not a single inhabitant, recovered in less than a year 700 families, including merchants and bankers; and the country, which had become a wilderness, was again cultivated.

Bishop Heber, who passed through Oydepore and the other Rajhpoot states, in 1825, mentions the abundant crops of wheat, barley, and poppies, which he witnessed, even in that, a season of drought; and he describes Bhelwana as a large town, with a great amount of moderate but widely-diffused wealth and comfort, the streets full of laden carts, and the shops stored with all kinds of goods.

Notwithstanding the great revolution which had thus been effected, and the great benefits conferred on the people of India, Lord Hastings's measures and policy, like those of Lord Wellesley's, were watched with coldness and distrust by the home authorities, and the results accepted grudgingly and without thanks. There was in the Council of the Company, and the Board of Control, an uneasy feeling which nothing could remove, that the Governor-General had "forced their hand;" and that instead of pursuing the policy which they had dictated to him, he had compelled them to sanction the policy which he and his Indian Council had laid down for themselves. They still deemed the necessity for action exaggerated, the schemes too vast, and the advantages of the results doubtful. They had begun by saying so; and it is not in human nature to approve the successful issue

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of a policy whose failure had been anticipated. Nor were there wanting many, as there are still many, to whom a sovereign, even in such persons as the Peshwa, Bajee Rao, and Appa Sahib of Berar, has a divine sacredness. There are many whose sympathies are so engrossed with the deposition of such persons from royal state and power, that they have no feeling for the wrongs by which they earned their fate, and no time to think how the lives, liberties, and prosperity of millions of people were involved in the struggle or affected by the result.

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CHAPTER XII.

1823—1842. Lord Amherst. Burmese War. Lord William Bentinck. Lord Auckland. Lord Ellenborough. Afghan War.

The Marquis of Hastings quitted office in 1823, and was succeeded in the same year by Lord Amherst, whose Governor-Generalship extended to the year 1828. Little occurred in India proper during this period, excepting the storming of the celebrated fortress of Bhurtpore by the British under Lord Combermere, who was sent to the assistance of the Rajah, whose throne and stronghold had been seized by an usurper. The latter, relying on the strength of the place, and deceived by the former failures of the British forces to take it in 1804, ventured to come into collision with the British power, but was fortunately undeceived after a siege of three weeks; for had the second siege of Bhurtpore failed, there would probably have been a general rising in the neighbouring states against the British supremacy.

Out of India the British were not long permitted to remain in the enjoyment of the peace, which was so necessary to enable the Indian Government to recruit its finances and to establish order and good government in its territories, so greatly increased. It had now to encounter a new enemy, an enemy

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very formidable, in truth, and still more formidable in the apprehensions of the Governors and people of British India.

By one of the singular coincidences which we have so often noticed, the existing dynasty in Burmah had begun and grown contemporaneously with the beginning and growth of the British in India. About the year 1753, an able and energetic Burman of low extraction, Alompra, had raised the standard of revolt against the Peguans, who had established themselves as conquerors over Burmah. He had not only succeeded in freeing his own country and placing himself on the throne, but had subjugated Pegu in its turn; and the power he acquired was maintained by his descendants, and increased by fresh conquests.

A large province of the kingdom of Siam, known as Tenasserim on the south, and some independent states on the north, adjoining British Bengal, including Aracan, Assam, and Cachar, were successively added to the Burmese dominions. In the course of their prosperous career they had inflicted a severe blow on the Chinese, who had invaded their country with a powerful army, which was wholly destroyed; and the Chinese never afterwards ventured to disturb them. This, and their continued career of success, made the Burmese a name of terror in the East; and they were themselves inflated with the most exaggerated ideas of their national power and their military prowess. The neighbourhood of two such powers as the British and the Burmese could not fail to bring with it causes of quarrel, dissension, and war.

It is certain that the English were not desirous

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of a war with Burmah; for they had nothing which they desired to acquire from that power, and had in the state of their military and financial resources everything to make them desire to remain at peace, if peace could honourably and safely be preserved. But Lord Amherst, the new Governor-General, found, as had so often been found by his predecessors, that he had no alternative but to engage in a war, which was forced upon him. On the other hand, it was by continual conquests that the Burmese had been brought to the British frontier; and confident in the power of their arms, which had never been withstood, and which they therefore deemed invincible, they had no particular regard for the sanctity of British territory, and looked forward to the conquest of Bengal as an assured continuation of their military successes. The conquest of Assam had given the Burmese the great valley of the Bramahputra River; and it seemed but natural to them that they should follow its course to the sea. The Burmese Court, warriors, and people were of course unanimous in the belief, that they had as much right to the rich places of the delta of the Ganges and Bramahputra, as the agents of an European trading corporation. Complaints by the Calcutta Government of ill-usage of their subjects, and of aggressions on their territory, were received with insolent contempt; and at last, their great general, Bundoola, the conqueror of Assam and the adjoining countries, got together an army of, it is said, 30,000 men, his tried soldiers, for the invasion of Bengal. Part of his equipment was a set of golden fetters, in which the Governor-General was to be brought prisoner to the Court of Ava.

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A mere war of defence would have been difficult and inglorious, and full of peril. The mere report of the threatened advance of Bundoola filled with panic the minds of the natives in the British territory; and that panic terror spread to the merchants and people of Calcutta itself. The Governor-General resolved, by a bold counter-move, to anticipate the blow, and planned an expedition against Burmah itself, into the very heart of its dominions. The great river of Burmah is the Irawaddy, which, like the Ganges, finds its way into the sea by many mouths, on one of which is situated the port of Rangoon, the principal port of the Burmese empire. Two armaments were fitted out at Calcutta and Madras, which were to rendezvous at Port Cornwallis, on the Great Andaman Island, whence the combined forces were to proceed, under the command of Sir Archibald Campbell, to Rangoon, the point of attack. In those days steam was almost unknown in India, but the Government were able to buy one steam-vessel belonging to a Calcutta Company, which proved a most valuable addition to the flotilla of ships of war and transports, got together at a great expense. In these days such an expedition across the Indian Sea would be one of little difficulty to the Indian Government; but at that time it was one which taxed its power and resources to the utmost.

The English were very ignorant of the real character and resources of the Government they were about to attack. It was, in many respects, far more formidable than any of the Hindoo states, which had successively fallen to their sway, and was a more completely organized and centralized Government,

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with a regular administration pervading every district and yielding implicit obedience to the orders from the capital. Rigid conscription laws were everywhere enforced by military Governors, to whom and to the numerous civil Governors the people paid unhesitating obedience. Instead of a mere casual aggregate of villages, such as constituted an Indian principality, the Burmese were a strongly-constituted nation, with a strong feeling of national pride.

The British had hoped that by striking a blow at such an important place as Rangoon, they would intimidate the Burmese Government, and compel it to accede to terms; or at all events, that they would find ample resources to enable them to proceed along the Irawaddy, through the heart of the country, up to the capital itself, and there dictate peace. They had sadly underrated the difficulties of their enterprise, and the pride and firmness of the Burmese Government and chiefs. The latter were at the same time still more ignorant of the power, the resources, and the perseverance of the Anglo-Indians, by whom success in every enterprise, however difficult and however costly, was deemed a necessity of their very existence as an Indian power.

The Burmese were not prepared for this flank movement, as it may be termed, of their enemy. In fact, notwithstanding many military qualities and some military aptitude, they never were prepared for an attack on an unexpected point, or for the most ordinary military combinations in the field.

The British force appeared before Rangoon, and a few ineffectual shots from the guns of the garrison were silenced by a broadside from an English frigate.

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In a few minutes the place fell without any further show of resistance, and the British took possession of Rangoon—but took possession of it as a town absolutely deserted—a few miserable huts and a magnificent pagoda. Under the stringent orders of the authorities the whole population had left, or been driven from, their homes into the dense jungles of which the greater part of the surrounding country consisted. The policy of the authorities had also removed boats, food, and everything that was likely to be of use to the invading army, which found itself in possession of the Rangoon hovels, unprovided with the means of moving onwards, either by land or by water, having to trust to transports from across the sea for provisions, with the rainy monsoon in a malarious country about to set in. This policy of the Burmese authorities—the removal of everything that could be removed, and the destruction of everything that could not—was everywhere carried out vigorously and unflinchingly. The country was without roads, except a few narrow tracks through thick jungles, amidst which the tracts of cultivated ground were rare; and even the banks of the navigable rivers presented obstacles to the march of land columns. The Burmese, moreover, had acquired considerable skill in the erection of defensive works, of which the chief characteristic peculiarity was the use of timber and trees, in the formation of enormous stockades and abattis. They were also accustomed to make great use of the spade in burrowing pits, and making approaches to their enemy by a succession of lines of such pits; and in such works they were very skilful and rapid.

Such was the position in which the British army found

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itself; such the foe with which it had to deal. The struggle was a long and obstinate one, and continued from the 7th of May, 1824, when Rangoon was taken, until the 26th of February, 1826, when the final treaty of peace was signed. To read the mere military narrative of the events, which occurred in this interval, is to read of an almost uniform succession of military achievements and victories. The immeasurable superiority of the British soldier over the most warlike natives of the East, as a fighting-man, and the immeasurable advantages of discipline and of European military art and science, were never more conspicuously shown. During the two years we read of a succession of engagements in which army after army of the Burmese was beaten and dispersed, in spite of the courage and obstinacy with which they renewed the struggle.

By degrees the promises of protection given and kept, and the liberal expenditure of British money, began to tell on the native mind. People began to flock into the towns and ports held by the British, and to return to their homes and fields; and boats, means of transport by land, and supplies of food became obtainable. Town after town fell, and Sir Archibald Campbell had advanced to within three easy marches of the capital, 600 miles from Rangoon. The soldiers looked forward to the certain capture and plunder of the city, while the prudent general feared that it would be abandoned to him—a barren and disastrous triumph which would leave him no alternative but to retrace his steps to the sea. The obstinate courage of the Burmese Court at last gave way, and a treaty of peace was signed, by which the Burmese bound themselves

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to pay partly in money down, and partly by instalments, the sum of 1,000,000*l.* sterling towards the expenses of the war, and ceded the provinces of Assam, Aracan, and Tenasserim to the British. By that treaty, and by a commercial treaty, the Burmese bound themselves to observe relations of amity with the British, and to permit them to trade in the Burmese ports on the same footing as natives; and it was stipulated that each power should have a resident in the capital of the other.

The narrative so told represents in bright colours a war glorious to the British arms, finished by a glorious and advantageous peace. By the cession of Assam and Aracan all danger of Burmese aggression on Bengal was for ever removed, the Burmese frontier being now a lofty and difficult range of mountains, the only practicable passes in which were in British hands. The acquisition of the Tenasserim province (the natives of which, a conquered people, had no sympathy with the Burmese) gave the British a position on the coast on the other side of Burmah easily defended, easy to be reinforced by sea, and in contiguity to the dominions of the Siamese, who had an old jealousy of the Burmese, and old grudges against them —a position therefore well calculated to keep the Burmese in check for the future.

This is the bright side of the story; but there is another side to it. The English successes were not obtained without a fearful loss of life. The climate and the pestiferous swamps and jungles had proved enemies far more fatal than the Burmese warriors. During the first year 3½ per cent. of the troops were killed in action, while 45 per cent. perished from

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disease; and although the mortality was diminished in the second year by one-half, the total loss during the war amounted to 72½ per cent. of the troops engaged. Of European non-commissioned officers and rank and file, there were actually killed in fight 105, but there died no less than 3134, and from the tale of actual deaths we may form some faint idea of the horrors and misery of many more thousands of sick. How many, who resisted the fatal influence at the time, afterwards perished by reason of the fevers which had permanently undermined their constitution, or the malarious poison which continued to lurk in their frame, is not recorded.

The expenditure of money was no less wasteful. The million which was extorted from the Burmese was a heavy fine on their exhausted treasury, but was a very trifling contribution towards the expenses by which the Anglo-Indian exchequer was impoverished. It is computed that the war cost the latter no less than 12,000,000*l.* sterling; and apart from the security obtained against Burmese aggression for the future, the territorial acquisitions appeared then and for many years afterwards a very onerous burthen. Seventy thousand square miles of territory were added to an empire already overgrown, but this territory was little other than an unreclaimed waste. It contained only a million or thereabouts of very poor people, from whom it was not possible to extract such a revenue as was required for the payment of the expenses of a civil and military government by Anglo-Indian officials and soldiers; but the Anglo-Indian Government was irrevocably committed to the burthen of such a government, and to the obligation of

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defending its burthensome acquisitions. A long course of years has in some respects changed the financial aspect of these possessions, but it is impossible even now to avoid the reflection, that if some small portion of the life that was so lavishly expended on the Irawaddy had been employed with equal courage and skill in resisting and chastising the invader, it would have cheaply and effectually deterred the Burmese from further aggressions. How much better would have been the position of the Indian people and of their Government if the twelve millions of money had then been spent in the public works which were absolutely wanting for the development of the resources of the country, in acquiring millions of acres of cultivated fields and millions of prosperous cultivators at home, instead of in annexing thousands of miles of profitless territory and a few hundred thousand poverty-stricken peasants from the dominions of their neighbour![1] But the Anglo-Indian Government had set up an idol which then and before and since exacted costly and bloody sacrifices; —that idol was prestige. The constant thought of statesman and general was:—What will become of our prestige if we do not resent, if we do not punish, if we do not exact full reparation? What will the princes and people of India think of us, what will our neighbours think and do, if we do not show them everywhere and at all times the invincible power of our arms? "Nemo me impune lacessit," was the motto of

[1] A small portion of the twelve millions, spent on works of irrigation in the North-West provinces, would have prevented the misery, the ruin, the fearful loss of life which was produced by the famine and the drought of 1837 and 1861.

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their policy. If they had placed more reliance on the actual strength of their power, and on the sure influence of good government and of good laws well administered, it would probably have been a safer as well as a more economical policy, and the prestige, which they sought by the bloody triumphs of war to chain to their car, would have come unsought to swell the beneficent triumphs of peace.

From the conclusion of the Burmese war there were several years of uninterrupted peace, and under the rule of Lord William Bentinck the Calcutta Government applied itself earnestly and zealously to the performance of its duties to its subjects. From the continued misgovernment of the small principality of Coorg, Lord William Bentinck found himself compelled to depose the Rajah, and in the year 1834 that territory was annexed to the British dominions. The annexation of Coorg was a matter of little importance, except as an assertion of the supreme sovereign authority of the British Government over the native powers, and as a warning to them, that it claimed the right, and would exercise the power, in the last resort of proceeding to the extreme measure of deprivation. For a similar reason the Rajah of Mysore was obliged to enter into a treaty by which the administration of that great principality was virtually placed under the control of the British Resident. By the arrangement with the Rajah of Mysore, no pecuniary profit was sought or made, and no power was acquired, except the power of providing for the better government of the people, whose subjection to the native dynasty had been originally the voluntary act of the British in the arrangements made after the destruction of Tippoo Sultan's kingdom. All the

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revenues of the country were to be, and have ever since been, faithfully applied for the discharge of the debts and for the benefit of the Rajah and State of Mysore.

The character of Lord William Bentinck, a man of singular moderation, of unimpeachable integrity, and possessed by no ambition but that of promoting the happiness of the Indian people under his rule, is itself a guarantee, that these strong measures to Native Rulers were adopted most reluctantly and under the obligations of an imperative duty, cast on the Imperial Power of India, which the British Government in truth had become. Nor is it unworthy of remark that these things took place while the home government was in the hands of the great Whig and Reform party, the successors of those statesmen who had so vehemently denounced all schemes of aggression in the East, and the inheritors of the policy of Fox.

In 1839 the Government of India was in the hands of Lord Auckland. At that time a dread of Russian aggrandizement in the East, amounting almost to monomania, had taken possession of the Indian Minister in England, and of some of the authorities in India. The air was full of rumours of Russian intrigues and of Russian schemes, and fearful visions were conjured up of Afghan and Persian armies, under the instigation of Russia, threatening the British possessions in India, while Russian intrigue and Russian gold were to excite the native powers and the native soldiery to rise in combined revolt and mutiny against their Sahib masters. Under the influence of panic terror the English threw themselves into the imbroglio of Afghan politics, and undertook to depose Dost Mohammed, the actual and able ruler of Afghanistan,

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and to restore as their ally and tool, the Shah Soojah a dispossessed sovereign—dispossessed undoubtedly with the full sanction of the chiefs, soldiers, and people of the country.

At first everything seemed to smile on this strange adventure. The British army made what was almost a triumphal march to the Afghan capital, and their puppet was placed on the throne. The strong fortress of Ghuznee was taken, as in this story we have seen Indian fortresses ordinarily taken:—a little artillery firing, the gates blown open by bags of gunpowder, a sudden rush of the assaulting columns, and an immediate capture of the place. The prestige of the British power and of British prowess was now, it was thought, felt throughout Central Asia, but there soon came a sad reverse. The people of Afghanistan rose in the depth of winter upon the small British garrison which reposed in confident security, so confident as not to have occupied the stronghold of the Bala Hissar, in which their ally the Shah Soojah contrived to find safety during the revolt, and even to have their cantonments in one unprotected part of the capital, and their magazines in another. Sir Alexander Burnes and several officers were murdered. Sir W. MacNaghten, the Resident, was afterwards massacred and the English garrison were driven to submit to a convention for the evacuation of Cabul, leaving their women as hostages. In the depths of winter the English army commenced their retrograde march, but were treacherously set upon by the Afghans, and ruthlessly massacred. Ghuznee was evacuated; but at Jellalabad General Sale, and at Candahar General Nott, with their small garrisons, held bravely on

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through the long winter against the overwhelming forces by which they were beleaguered.

Nothing could exceed the consternation with which the news of the great disaster filled all men's minds throughout British India; and serious as the reverse really was, it was nothing to the exaggerated representations of it. The reports and rumours of the bazaars magnified it tenfold, and it was fondly believed by the enemies of the British that their armies had been annihilated and their power at last destroyed. Their great idol, prestige, had fallen, and seemed broken to pieces in its fall.

There was a new Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, a man whose vivid imagination was filled with pictures of the possible disasters of another failure. He seemed at first disposed to content himself with the safe withdrawal of the garrisons that were still on Afghan soil; but at length he gave a reluctant permission to the generals to advance again. The Sepoys, frightened by the exaggerated stories of the doings of the past winter and of real obstacles in their way, were with difficulty induced to follow their leaders once more into the land of terror.

The generals had somehow found it quite impossible to procure transport for the retrograde movements which they were enjoined to make, but all these insuperable difficulties vanished when they obtained the desired permission to wipe away by new victories the stain which had fallen on the reputation of the army. In truth, the retaking of Cabul was found a work of no great difficulty. General Nott with his small army reinforced on one side, and General Pollock with a new army gathered on the other, simultaneously

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advanced by two routes on the capital, where their forces joined, and the British were again masters. Warned by the past, the Government of India thought it best to be content with this barren vindication of the honour of their arms; and having procured by negotiation the release of the lady prisoners, and destroyed the fortifications of the city, and carried away the gates of the Temple of Somnauth, the British were fain to retire into their own country. A few barren feats of arms, and a song of triumph in the guise of a proclamation uttered by the Governor-General on the possession of the great trophy, and the trophy itself, the gates of Somnauth, were all that was to be shown as a set off for the disastrous results of the expedition; while the perpetrators of the massacre remained in undisputed and undisturbed possession of Afghanistan.

The prestige of the English in India was, however, to be soon set up again at the expense of others, namely the Ameers of Scinde.

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CHAPTER XIII.

1842—1849. Lord Ellenborough. Annexation of Scinde. Lord Hardinge. The Sikhs. Lord Dalhousie.

THE story of the great annexation of Scinde may be shortly told—as short as the time which was occupied in it—although it was the subject of much and long and very angry discussion, mixed with painful personalities, in Parliament and in the press. Unhappily, the vehement controversial pugnaciousness of Napier the historian—especially in matters which affected Napier the conqueror—has caused these wretched personalities to be perpetuated in valuable books sadly disfigured by them; and from the personalities and from the controversies it is a work of some trouble to elicit the simple historic truth.

Scinde is the province of the Lower Indus. At the time of its annexation it was bounded on the north by the Sikh kingdom of Runjeet Singh, which came down to Mooltan. It was of great extent, including the whole plain of the Indus below Mooltan, but was very thinly peopled, and so far as it had any government or rule at all, was under the government and rule of certain Beluchee families (families originally from Beluchistan), the princes or principal chiefs of which were called Ameers, one of whom

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was acknowledged as in a certain sense the chief. The people themselves were Hindoos by race and by religion. About sixty years before the British annexation, the founders of these families, at the head of a large following of warriors, Beluchees by race, and Mohammedans by religion, had come down from the mountains to the north-west of the Indus, and had made themselves without difficulty masters of the Scinde country.

The rule of the Ameers was as bad as it was possible for any rule to be, and there is no reason to doubt that the Ameers were in personal conduct rather worse than the ordinary run of Eastern despots. They took everything from the cultivators that they could take, extracted money by every possible device from every trader and artisan, and made equally free with the wives and daughters of their subjects. They were as fond of hunting as Anglo-Norman kings, and like these had their forests or hunting-grounds kept sacred for their amusement. Their Beluchee followers were numerous and warlike, and of great courage and individually possessed of considerable soldierly qualities, but wholly undisciplined and without any tincture of military science. These men, of course, imitated the licence of their rulers, and treated the poor natives harshly, cruelly and contumeliously, without pity, without remorse, without restraint. This was the state of things in Scinde.

It was considered important by the British rulers of India (tempore Lord Auckland) to open up the navigation of the Indus, trade on which had been destroyed by the exactions and plunder of the riverain Ameers, and to obtain some military posts in Scinde with a

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view to the operations against the Afghans. The Ameers were induced to enter into a treaty with the English, by which the latter were allowed to have a force at certain stations in the Scinde territory, and by which the Ameers not only bound themselves to political alliance with the English, but especially to abstain from all tolls and exactions on the commerce of the Indus, which was thenceforth to be open. It is said that this treaty was obtained by Lord Auckland by some coercion and by some fraud, but there does not appear to be any evidence of either. The treaty itself was one which was not disadvantageous to the Ameers, and was only advantageous to the English in so far as it prevented a hostile alliance against them with other Mohammedan rulers or tribes, or with the Sikhs ; and as it opened the commerce of the river, was a benefit infinitely greater to the population of the country and to its rulers than it could possibly be to the Indian Government or their subjects, or to the British. It had, like all the similar treaties with the Indian powers, one fatal vice, that it bound the English to maintain the rule of the legitimate tyrants for the time being, and necessarily involved them in the family discussions and disputes as to who was the legitimate ruler.

After the disaster of Cabul, there was a great ferment amongst the Mohammedans of India and the neighbouring countries, who have always entertained a strong feeling of religion and nationality against the infidel Franks. The Mohammedans of India, of course, look upon the English as persons who have conquered the great Mogul Empire which was theirs, and it is in the ordinary course of things

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that their co-religionists in the neighbouring countries, who are also of common race, should sympathize with them, and should be ready to accept any call to arms against the unbelievers, especially when that call is aided by the prospect of unlimited plunder.

Lord Ellenborough was satisfied on evidence furnished him, although the truth of that evidence was stoutly and persistently questioned by those who took the Ameers' side, that they had entered into a hostile correspondence with other Mohammedans with a view to an alliance against the English. Sir Charles Napier asserts, no doubt truthfully, and there is not much reason to doubt truly, that the common expression and common feeling was to "Cabul the English in Scinde," that the Beluchees were better and more numerous than the Afghans, and that the English in Scinde were fewer than those who had been the victims of the Cabul massacre. It was also alleged that the Ameers had distinctly and repeatedly violated the treaty in respect of the free navigation of the Indus, and had committed various other wrongs. Lord Ellenborough thereupon determined that it was necessary to call them to account for their hostile proceedings, and to inflict some punishment on them.

He was the more peremptory and the more harsh from the position of British India at the time. It was felt that much prestige had been lost in Afghanistan, that there was some danger of an explosion of the hostile Mohammedan populations; and there were exaggerated apprehensions of that danger. After the reverses of the Afghan campaign, it was held of vital importance to the safety of the Indian Empire at once to put down with a strong arm any

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manifestation of disaffection or disloyality, and to convince the neighbours, the allies and the subjects of the British, that the latter had lost neither their power nor strength, whether to punish or protect.

It is impossible not to feel that at any other time and under any other circumstances the wrongs complained of would not have led to war. They would have been the subject of remonstrance and negotiation, and if necessary some slight chastisement. The hostile proceedings against the Ameers were not taken really and *bonâ fide* because they were necessary to obtain reparation and redress of the wrongs done, but because the wrongs done afforded a sufficient excuse for hostile proceedings and military operations considered necessary to restore the military prestige of the British, and to strike terror into the disaffected masses of Mohammedans. It has in the history of the world often been thought better to subdue a revolt than that there should be no revolt to subdue. This seems to have been a similar case; and Lord Ellenborough dictated a penal treaty, which he required the Ameers to sign avowedly as a punishment for their past misconduct. Except that it was a penal treaty, and intended and avowed to be a punishment, and therefore a humiliation, there was nothing exorbitant or immoderate in the terms proposed.

It was much questioned at the time whether there had been in truth any offence which called for or justified any punishment whatever. With all the facts of the case before us, with all the probabilities, it is not easy to believe that Lord Ellenborough and his advisers were misled by forged documents or suborned testimony; and if he was not, there was an offence, and a

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grave one, which called for, and fully merited punishment. Of course, in matters of political accusation it is always easy to get up a plausible counter-case, just as in criminal cases of great interest there is scarcely an atrocious criminal convicted, who has not some loud and zealous partisans of the creed that he was an innocent victim.

The proposal for this penal treaty was received with great indignation by the Ameers. Sir Charles Napier was the commander of the forces in Scinde, and it was his duty, the duty imposed on him by the Governor-General, to enforce its acceptance, and if not accepted to take the territory which the Ameers had been required to cede. It was Colonel Outram's duty as political Resident with the principal Ameers at Hyderabad to obtain the acceptance of the treaty by negotiation, if possible; and it is at this point that a great personal controversy as to Sir Charles Napier's conduct in the annexation began. Outram maintained then, and ever afterwards, that the Ameers were ready to yield to the pressure which had been put on them, and would have signed and submitted without the bloodshed which followed, and he attributed the impetuous appeal which Sir Charles Napier made to the god of battles to the unscrupulous desire of that general to win fame and rank and prize-money by some great military achievement.

Napier, it is charged, had always thirsted for an opportunity of distinction as a general, and had now that opportunity, and hastened to clutch it, destroying the peaceful, bloodless scheme of negotiations by which Outram was about to obtain all that had been asked and all that could have been justly exacted.

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On behalf of Napier the foul imputations of wicked personal motive were thrown back with the unaffected indignation of a man not only of unimpeachable integrity, but certainly, so far as he was conscious, scrupulously anxious not to be tempted by the love of fame into the commission of the wholesale murder, which a battle gratuitously sought would, by his own conscience, be deemed. Foul imputations of motive were cast back on Outram; all his opposition to Napier's policy, all his criticisms on Napier's conduct, all his advocacy of the Ameers were nothing but the wicked inventions of envy and mortified self-love which had at last grown into the most unscrupulous and wicked personal hostility to the great man whose power had superseded his, and whose success had overshadowed him. It is humiliating to read this bandying of personal accusations of wickedness so foul. The substance of Sir Charles Napier's case is something far better. It was this: Outram was allowing himself to be grossly deceived by those frauds and falsehoods of which oriental diplomacy is so fond, and in which it is so ready and skilful. Forces were being secretly gathered, not only by the Ameers who were then being dealt with, but by all their friends and allies. They were advancing on all sides, and in overwhelming numbers, with a resolution to extirpate the English intruders. Every delay, even a day's, might be fatal. It was not only that the Ameers with whom Outram was treating were themselves false, but it is certain, say the Napiers, and it is not easy to deny it, that such an army as was then assembling would not have brooked restraint from any authority in Scinde, if there had been any such authority honestly desirous to restrain them, from

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what to them would seem the easy defeat and assured destruction of the hated infidel Franks.

Sir Charles Napier determined to anticipate the attack before all the forces which were arriving to surround him had come up. With a small army of less than 3000 men he sought the Ameer's Beluchees, assembled to the number of fifteen or twenty thousand, at Meanee, and won there one of those great victories which illustrate the military annals of the British in India. The fight was arduous. There was no lack of daring or courage on the part of the Beluchees, but notwithstanding their vast numbers and their bravery they were hopelessly routed with immense slaughter. It was the helpless struggle of a huge mass of brave men without a general, without the organization or the discipline of a regular army, against a small but compact body trained to move and to fight, guided by the most skilful generalship, and able to rely on unfailing pluck in any critical movement or emergency. It is due to Sir Charles Napier's generalship to say that the battle of Meanee was not a battle forced upon him and unexpectedly won with small numbers, but was one in which the result was exactly as he had calculated on before the fight began, after a careful examination and consideration of all the elements of real military strength on both sides. Perhaps the worst part of Sir Charles Napier's conduct was that he was there at all with so small an army. It was sufficient to irritate, to provoke, to invite attack, not sufficient to terrify or deter such men as the Ameer's Beluchees. If the threat of military coercion was to be used at all, it should have been with such a show of force as would have made

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submission not dishonourable. The triumph that was obtained by blood should have been won by terror. The fact, however, that there was such an army to defeat at Meanee was itself a strong proof that Napier's apprehension of the real designs and intentions of the Ameers was well founded. Nor was this all. The defeated army at Meanee, large as it was, was but a portion of the forces in the field. Why in the field at all except to attack the English? Still larger forces, partly those which were coming to the aid of the Meanee army when they were anticipated by the vigorous onslaught of the English general, and others from the mountain haunts of the Beluchees, in no sense inhabitants of Scinde, were prepared for a renewed struggle.

After the battle of Meanee Napier entered Hyderabad as a conqueror, and there prepared for the new army which, under the most distinguished of the Ameers, the Lion, was advancing to overwhelm and destroy him. Having made his arrangements, and called up succours which were available from Sakhur above and from Kurrachee below, he suddenly burst upon the enemy at a place called Dubha, near Hyderabad. This battle was also fought against an enormous disproportion of numbers, but fought as before with the same results —victory, and great loss to the enemy, accurately counted on beforehand as the sure results of the combinations made.

Much that appears to be marvellous in the stories of these fights, as of many other fights from the first in the Indian wars of the British, disappears if we take into consideration certain points which are often overlooked, when the victories are merely described

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for the purpose of gratifying the national vanity. In the estimates of the numbers of the large hordes of the enemy, it is by no means certain from the narratives that all the camp-followers were always deducted. Of the real fighting-men how many were those who were really armed with effective weapons? We know that their very best guns were much inferior to those of the British, and their ammunition bad. There was no general who had ever learnt the art or studied the science of war, no staff, no regimental organization. There was probably not a man amongst them who could move 1000 men on a field of battle without throwing them into confusion. We may have some inadequate notion of what the real military position in these great Indian battles was, if we were to conceive what would be the position of an army composed of the militia regiments of England, suddenly called together with the best arms they could lay their hands on, and appearing on the field each under the independent command of its own Lord-Lieutenant, who had just been quarrelling and fighting with some of the others. There is no disproportion in numbers, which, in a victory of a real army under a skilled general over such an armed mob, ought really to excite surprise or to call for the pæans of national glorification.

The victory of Hyderabad was decisive. All the Ameers in the battle, who were not killed, surrendered to the conqueror, and in a few days all the others came in, submitted, and were deposed. By a judicious proclamation announcing to every chief and landowner that all their rights were to be scrupulously respected by the conqueror, and that no one should suffer

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the slightest injury in person or in property, Napier obtained the ready acquiescence of all the influential persons in the change of Government; and in two months only from the beginning of the campaign the whole country was conquered and annexed, amidst the joyful acclamations of the poor natives—the real people of Scinde—who had long been the victims of a grinding and debasing tyranny.

That so far as regarded the real people of Scinde—so far as regarded the interests of humanity—the revolution was a most beneficial one is incontestable. If it was a wrong to the Ameers, as many in the British Parliament and British Press stoutly held and loudly protested, it was a wrong to the vested interests of a tyrannous alien body of princes and nobles to plunder, oppress, and enslave a wretched people; and it was a wrong compensated by the elevation of that wretched mass into a body of free men—freeholders, enjoying in peace and safety, as they never had enjoyed before, the fruits of their honest industry. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that the agitation which was got up and was long persevered in for the restoration of the Ameers, that is to say, the restoration of the liberated Scindians to the thraldom of their deposed masters, was not successful. It is not, however, to be denied that there was long prevalent an uneasy feeling in the British national mind that the conquest of Scinde was an instance of an aggressive war, undertaken for the purposes of territorial aggrandizement. All the authorities, both in India and at home, except the Governor-General and Sir Charles Napier not only disapproved of the war in its origin, but dreaded the

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acquisition of Scinde as an expensive, burthensome, and profitless addition to territories already too large, and as advancing the frontier so as to involve conflicts with a troublesome and dangerous neighbour, with whom it would be scarcely possible to keep peace, and with whom war would be difficult and costly, without either profit or glory.

The feeling of the authorities at the India House was so strong, that the Napier partisans could only account for it by the idea (which at last assumed the character of a delusion) that the Directors—thirty English gentlemen—had, from motives of personal hostility towards their victorious general, entered into a conspiracy with newspaper writers in India and in England, with the Civil Service of Bombay and Calcutta, with members of Parliament, and with two successive ministers—Tory and Whig—to calumniate, to thwart, to spite, if possible, to crush Sir Charles Napier.

In the bitter hostility with which Napier repaid the supposed malevolence of the Directors, he charged them with impossible crimes as rulers of India, and there are readers of Indian history, particularly foreigners, who still think those crimes possible and true. The Directors were "ignominious tyrants"—a money-making trading corporation—who did not scruple to plunder and oppress a hundred and fifty millions of people to increase their dividends, who applied to their personal profit the funds, which ought to have gone to the works of public improvement so much needed, who sought even to enrich their treasury by cheating their general out of his just share of his legitimate prize-money.

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As these charges appear in the Napier histories and biography, it is due to the English nation to say that there is not the slightest foundation for them.

It is strange that an Indian official, so high as Sir Charles Napier was, should have been so entirely ignorant of the fact that no increase or diminution of the dividends of the Company was possible, that the Company had for more than half a century been limited to the receipt of the fixed sum of six hundred and thirty thousand pounds per annum, an annuity charged on the revenues of India, just as all the other annuities to all the deposed and mediatized native potentates were. The dividends to the proprietors of the East India Stock were exactly the same as the dividends on consols, and belonged to much the same class of persons,—frugal men, mostly civil and military servants, who had invested their savings in that fund, and their widows and orphans. The trading had not only for half a century been dwindling until it was less than the trading of a nobleman who sells the produce of his home farm, but in the year 1831 had been actually put an end to and prohibited by an Act of Parliament, under the provisions of which all their commercial assets had been disposed of.

The Directors themselves had each a small fixed salary, and had no means, directly or indirectly, of making the smallest pecuniary profit out of the oppression or plunder of the people of India. They had no money to spend for any purpose, except from Indian taxation or from loans or burthens on the Indian revenue. Except so far as they had the patronage of the cadetships and writerships at the bottom of the scale, and of the councillors at the head of it, they had

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no possible interest, except the interest of the Indian taxpayer. Whatever they spent, they spent for him; whatever they saved, they could save only for him. Nor could they give a single order or take a single step, either to increase or diminish expenditure, to increase or diminish taxation, or by way of direction as to a single act of foreign or domestic policy or legislation, except by a formal writing addressed to the appropriate local authority formally approved of by a responsible minister of the Crown. The minister might, of course, be incapable, indolent, wrong-headed, but could not have any personal interest or motive to turn him from the honest discharge of his duty to the people under his control. It really is necessary, at the expense of some reiteration, to make this clear:—that there is not the slightest foundation for the delusion, that there continued to be a commercial company, which was permitted to make merchandise of the Government of India. Any one who knows anything of the working of English departments of Government must know, moreover, that so far as Indian policy or legislation was directed from England, it was so to a considerable extent, according to the opinions, suggestions, and advice of the permanent officials at the India House and India Board, men selected for their ability and knowledge, and of great experience, inaccessible to corruption, and zealous in the discharge of their duty.

It is simply absurd, therefore, to suppose that the unfavourable judgment of the Directors as to the propriety of the annexation of Scinde, and as to its value as a conquest, was anything but the best judgment, honestly formed by them in discharge of their duty to the people of England and to the people

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of India. As to its value subsequent events have shown that Ellenborough and Napier were right, and the Directors were wrong. The supposed rashness of the two former was true prudence. The apprehensions of the latter were from over-caution carried to timidity.

Sir Charles Napier was made Governor of Scinde by Lord Ellenborough, with absolute military power, and ruled by martial law, which by his energy and stern impartial justice he made good and effective. He took means to prevent the disbanded armies of the Beluchees from becoming hordes of banditti; many of the best and boldest he formed into soldiers and armed police, to put down robbers, instead of being themselves robbers; and the others were sternly ordered to cultivate land, instead of plundering the inoffensive cultivators.

He said in substance:—You have not hitherto thought robbery and murder or slavery wrong, but now I forbid it, and any man, chief or noble or warrior, be he who he may, who kills or robs or carries into slavery, I will, without hesitation, execute; and he kept his word.

To the neighbouring tribes he said:—If you come down from your hill-fastnesses to plunder and kill my people, I will follow you into the most inaccessible of your strongholds and take them and punish you; and he was again as good as his word. Some powerful tribes did come down in spite of his prohibition. Then, by a campaign, which for completeness of plan, skilful execution, and the personal activity and intrepidity of the old warrior really deserves all the praise given to it by his brother's

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eulogistic history, he contrived to penetrate what did seem the inaccessible mountain homes of the predatory highlanders, to draw his toils closer and closer around them, and at length to hem them in. It was a wonderful triumph of military genius and military conduct of the able, civilized, highly-trained general over natural difficulties, that seemed impossibilities in an unknown country, and over all the arts and opposition of crafty and bold marauders, used to fight and to fly, and having themselves the most perfect knowledge of all the passes and defiles of their natural fortifications, with courage and arms to defend them. Tribes, numbering thousands of armed warriors of the mountains, who had been for ages the scourge of the peaceful inhabitants of the plains, over hundreds of miles were subdued into submission to Napier's orders, no more to murder and plunder any persons under his rule, or any tribes under his protection. To the friendly and well disposed tribes he gave promise of protection and aid. To the marauders who were willing to take to the peaceful pursuits of honest industry, he gave land to cultivate, and thousands of them took his gift and performed the conditions. He established a strong cordon of armed men along the mountain line; and the frontier of Scinde became, as if by magic, as peaceful and as safe as any of the oldest frontiers of the British possessions. The interior was peaceful, quiet, contented, and prosperous, under a reign of order and regular government, novelties to which the people soon became reconciled and accustomed, and which may go far also to reconcile us to much that was doubtful in the quarrel with the Ameers, and in their deposition. If it is ever permitted to Government to

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do evil that good may come of it, the impartial historian may conclude that in the case of the annexation of Scinde it was justifiable to do a little wrong in order to do an unspeakable amount of good.

The conquest of Scinde was soon followed by that of the Punjaub, the dominion of the Sikhs.

The Sikhs, to whom allusion has already been made, were a religious and military fraternity, whose story is full of interest, and it may be of instruction to all who are interested in the future well-being of the large population of India to describe them more fully.

The original founder was Nanuk, who was, in the truest sense of the word, a religious reformer. His tenets breathed the spirit of the purest morality and self-denial, even to austerity; and he endeavoured to establish the worship of the one God, purifying the religious belief of his countrymen alike from the debasing idolatries of the Brahmans and the intolerant bigotry of the Mohammedans. Universal brotherhood and equality were the basis of the new faith; the entire absence of caste distinction was the rule of the new church. Whoever was initiated into the body was received with a solemn rite, in which men of all castes participated, in token that between them for the future there was to be no caste. Originally the followers of Nanuk were by profession and by practice a peace society, but as their numbers multiplied they attracted the attention of the rulers, and they were, as all religious reformers have always been, persecuted, oppressed, and slandered. A new organization was given to them by their second founder, Govind, by which they were taught the right of self-defence

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against their oppressors; the exhibition of manly courage in resistance was made their great duty, the practice of military arts their paramount education.

For some generations there was a succession of pontiffs, first the successors of Nanuk the peaceful, next the successors of Govind the warlike, each of whom was acknowledged as the "Gooroo" or Spiritual Head, in whom was supposed to dwell the Divine Spirit. But ultimately, and long before the period of our narrative, all individual spiritual headship was abolished, and it was accepted as part of their creed that the Divine Spirit which had lodged in the individual Gooroos had now mystically entered in some ineffable manner into the whole congregation of the Faithful, and thus the "Khalsa," or fraternity became itself a mystic and sacred body. In their new organization, as in their old, they were cruelly persecuted. Wholesale massacres, the most atrocious tortures, the burning of towns, the devastation of the country, were the modes resorted to by the Mohammedan sovereigns of convincing their heretical subjects. Orthodox Christians could not have behaved more rigorously towards their heterodox neighbours, nor shown more zeal in the cause of God, nor taken more vigorous measures for the extirpation of a soul-destroying heresy. The Sikhs were crushed, but, for the most part disdaining apostasy, took refuge in the wildest and most inaccessible mountains, in dreary and pestiferous jungles, where a few of them succeeded in evading the destroying zeal of the true believers.

The dispersed remnant of the Khalsa had not many years to wait unavenged on their oppressors. Early in the eighteenth century began the rapid de-

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cline of the power of the Great Mogul. Sovereign after sovereign was killed or dethroned in rapid succession. Nadir Shah's march of devastation through the northern provinces, the sacking and massacre of Delhi, the sacred capital of Mussulman Hindostan, and the captivity and ignominious subjection of the unfortunate sovereign, which occurred in 1739, gave a blow to the Mogul Power which it never recovered. In province after province the viceroy nawabs and viziers became independent sovereigns; the subjugated rajahs and chiefs recovered their independence; and in Bengal the English began to lay the foundations of the power which was ultimately to absorb them all. More immediately connected with the fortunes of the Sikhs, the Mahrattas contended for the mastery of Central and Northern India with the monarchs of Delhi; and in the midst of all these complications of family feuds, palace intrigues, rebellions, revolts, and wars, the Dooranees, who were gathered at Cabul (a name which has since become so painfully familiar to English ears), came down with their hordes of Afghans, and the valleys of the Indus and the Sutlej were in the course of the eighteenth century invaded twelve times by these persevering enemies.

In these troublous times the Sikhs gradually began to reappear in force. The bolder spirits, who had sought safety and concealment in the recesses of the hills and deserts, had adopted the only course of life open to them, and had become skilful and bold cattle-lifters and robbers of great name, fame, and reputation. As the empire and all the provinces of the empire became more and more distracted, they

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acquired numbers, strength, and courage. They began to reappear openly in the towns. A gallant Sikh horseman might be seen now and then galloping in open defiance of the authorities to visit the sacred well of Umritsur and galloping away in safety to the haunts of his gang or his tribe. Captains and chiefs of note began to rise amongst them; those Sikhs who had been driven to renounce their faith resumed the profession of it; and many a bold spirit applied for initiation into the ranks of the Khalsa. No member of the Khalsa was esteemed unless he was armed and mounted. Arms and a steed were, therefore, the first wants; to be an intrepid cavalier was the first accomplishment and highest duty of the Sikh. They became numerous enough to be divided into tribes, and the tribes to be subdivided into what English criminal lawyers would probably call gangs; but the tie of the Sacred Brotherhood of the Khalsa always kept them more or less connected together, and as soon as they were strong enough and the regular government was weakened enough for the purpose, they began to hold regular annual conferences or conventions of the Khalsa at the sacred well of Umritsur for the regulation of matters which concerned the whole body.

Such an organization necessarily became formidable in the midst of the civil wars and foreign invasions of which the Punjaub was the theatre. For many years of wars they acted a part not unlike the Black Riders of Germany, or the Condottieri of Italy; they were valiant soldiers of fortune, whose services the contending parties were often eager to purchase; and where they had once been persecuted almost to

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extinction, they were now recognized, wanted, and rewarded by rajahs, viziers, and emperors. Sometimes they resisted the invader, more frequently they gathered round his retreating armies to ease them of their plunder, but they were not vulgar mercenaries or plunderers; they were, in truth, the Vikings and Northmen of Northern India, and, like the Normans, they wrested villages, lordships, and towns from their former chiefs and lords. Finally, as the result of a great battle which they fought in 1764, they established themselves as the lords and masters of an extensive country near Lahore, which has since been known as the Home of the Sikhs. From this their home they started sometimes on marauding excursions or raids, sometimes on organized expeditions for the conquest of territory, in which they were generally successful; as with the Normans, the conquered land was divided into lordships, not only between the chiefs or captains, but between all the band or army.

Amongst them one had rank and influence as a captain, another as the descendant of a Gooroo or of some distinguished family; there were different degrees of honour and pre-eminence among the tribes, and different degrees of wealth among the individuals, but according to the true principle of the theory of the Khalsa Brotherhood no one of them appears to have acknowledged a sovereign or lord. Thus, in the province to the south of the Sutlej, the first Sikh province which became subject to British power and protection, there were found no less than sixty thousand lordships or baronies, varying from the splendid principality of Putteeala to the share of a village, every proprietor of

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which claimed to be absolute sovereign and master within his own territory.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century there appeared among the Sikhs one of the great men of the world—Runjeet Singh. He was the descendent of a Sikh family of some note and some ancestral pretensions, for even under the Khalsa system of theoretic equality the hereditary principle could not be excluded. Very early in life he appears to have shown himself able and astute, and he contrived to obtain as a reward of some important military services to the Cabul sovereigns a grant of the town and district of Lahore as a rajahship or principality. Like other successful adventurers in the East, he relied on his sword as his real title, but however little disposed to pay any obedience to the titular emperor, he did not disdain to obtain an apparent legal confirmation of his power by a formal grant from the possessor, real or nominal, of the imperial sovereignty. Runjeet Singh became, as Rajah of Lahore, by far the most powerful of the Sikh chiefs, and partly by force of arms, and partly by address and skill, succeeded in forcing himself to be accepted by the Sikhs to the north of the Sutlej as their head and leader; but those who had established themselves to the south of the Sutlej, and were more nearly in the position of the feudal Norman barons of mediæval Europe, were by no means disposed to submit to this assumption of supremacy.

It was at this period in the history of Runjeet and the Sikhs, about the year 1803, that they first came into contact with the British power. One of our numerous wars—the Mahratta war—

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had, as we have seen, brought Lord Lake and his army up to the banks of the Sutlej, and in the Mahratta campaign, which lasted from 1803 to 1805, the Sikhs, who had at first joined the Mahrattas, came over to the English side. It is said that the old Sikh chiefs were struck with admiration at the simplicity of the appearance of Lord Lake, the Great Frank Sahib, his tent and dress, which contrasted so strongly with the magnificent show and glitter of the native princes and commanders; and they were sagacious enough to find in that simplicity the sign and proof of the real strength which could afford to despise all the accessories of oriental show. Runjeet himself is said to have observed with great interest the appearance and evolutions of the disciplined battalions of the English and Sepoy infantry, and to have formed thus early such an estimate of the real military power of the Franks, as to resolve to avoid himself all collision with that power of iron, against which so many native potentates had broken themselves. It is certain, at all events, that during the whole of his long and successful career it was his cardinal rule of policy to maintain relations of peace and of apparently friendly alliance (an *entente cordiale*) with the Calcutta Government.

The independent Sikh chieftains to the south of the Sutlej, from what they saw of the power and conduct of the British, on their side preferred, as we have seen, placing themselves under the protection and paramount sovereignty of the latter. Treaties were accordingly made by which perpetual friendship and alliance were agreed on between Runjeet and the English, but by which he was forbidden to trench on the possessions

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or power of the Cis-Sutlej chiefs, who remained, and still remain, within their own dominions independent sovereigns for all internal purposes. Many, however, of the Cis-Sutlej families have become extinct, and their possessions have fallen in to the paramount power.

Runjeet, thus checked on the south, was allowed free scope to the north of the Sutlej, and by a series of conquests, in which he scarcely experienced a reverse, except in conflicts with some of the fiercer mountain tribes in their fastnesses, he gradually extended his sway from the boundaries of Scinde up to and over the Himalayas to the boundaries of China and Thibet.

The Sikh soldiers—the army of the Khalsa—were dazzled by the glories of a military career, in the triumphs and profits of which they were large sharers, and were reconciled thereby to the gradual expansion of Runjeet's personal power from that of an equal chief or sirdar, through that of an elected commander-in-chief, to that of a full-blown absolute oriental sovereign and despot as the Maharajah of the Punjaub and Cashmere. The Khalsa soldiers even submitted to that which was to them the hardest and most distasteful change:—their own conversion from dashing irregular cavalry, every man an independent knight with the least possible subjection to military discipline, into a trained standing army, formed and disciplined after that model which had so early been observed and admired by Runjeet. He procured some Italian and French soldiers, amongst whom the names of Allard and Ventura became conspicuous as those of two of his generals, with whose assistance he formed an army, said to amount

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to 90,000 men, of fine soldier-like qualities, well-trained, armed, and disciplined, and provided with a large artillery served by skilful artillerymen.

With this force he might have perhaps realized to a great extent a dream of Govind Singh, and have become the founder of that which had been predicted, a Sikh dynasty as sovereigns of all Hindostan, had it not been for the British, who had preoccupied the greater part of the ground themselves, and whose superior power overshadowed his. As they had forbidden his advance beyond the Sutlej, so they also interfered to prevent the extension of his territory westward towards the mouths of the Indus. It is tolerably certain that the Ameers of Scinde, whose lands were annexed by England after Sir Charles Napier's brilliant achievements, would many years before have been absorbed into the possessions of the Sikh potentate, but that it did not suit British policy to permit the whole of the navigation of the Indus to fall under the sway of one sovereign, or to permit so powerful and astute a ruler as Runjeet to establish himself on the shores of the Persian Gulf, and to hold in his single hand the keys of every gate between Central Asia and the peninsula of Hindostan. He was therefore warned off Scinde, and did not care to despise that warning. As some consolation for this check he received from England a magnificent present of English dray-horses which became the pride of his stud. They were conveyed up the Indus by a British expedition, who, not confining themselves to the mere care of their precious quadrupeds, noted carefully for the future use of their Government all that was to be seen and learnt in an exploration of the river.

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To the north were the territories of the Afghans, and Runjeet was too prudent to venture on such an expedition as that which afterwards resulted in so much disaster and useless loss of life to his British allies. Beyond wresting the plain and valley of Peshawur at the foot of the mountains from the Afghans, he thought it best not to attempt aggression in that direction; and for many of the last years of his life he was fain to content himself with maintaining and consolidating his rule over the Punjaub and Cashmere.

His rule was a simple military despotism, his only instruments were soldiers and tax-gatherers. There was no system of law, no machinery for the administration of criminal or civil justice, no courts of law, no prisons, no police except the village watchers. If the disputes of his subjects were not settled amongst themselves by an arbitration of a jury of the village, the injured person applied to the Governor, or sometimes to Runjeet himself, and justice was done much after the fashion with which we are familiar in the stories of the "Arabian Nights." The murderer was pursued by the family or friends of the murdered, who either took life in return or exacted compensation; an injured husband was always permitted to take the lives of the offenders; a thief when caught was generally punished by the Governor of the district by fine or mutilation at his discretion. Much depended on the character of the Governor of the district, and amongst others the Italian Governor of Peshawur is recorded as having inflicted death summarily and almost indiscriminately on all offenders within his district. With

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that and a few other exceptions the punishment of death was seldom inflicted, and the rule of Runjeet Singh was, for an oriental rule, singularly free from cruelty, or at least from blood.

His fiscal system was, however, of the heaviest kind; in addition to the land-tax, which is the basis of all revenue in India, and was about a fourth of the produce, he sought a revenue by every conceivable form of impost; taxes on every trade and on every handicraft; customs on everything not only going into and out of his territories but going into every province and district; octroi duties on every article going into every town; a monopoly of salt, spirits and drugs, and stamps; in short, a tariff of customs, excise, and taxes direct and indirect, as universal and as complicated as that of an English Chancellor of the Exchequer in the early part of this century.

With all this the country enjoyed comparative quiet and prosperity under his rule. He created a feudal nobility out of the more powerful of his captains, and out of his Court favourites, to whom he gave large lordships, either on condition of military service by themselves and their retainers, or in free gift, and this nobility gave a certain degree of splendour to his throne; his numerous standing army was well paid, and their families considered themselves in some sort, as they in truth were, sharers of his power. Throughout his territory there was greater security than had been known before; the revenues extracted from the people were immediately expended, giving employment to large classes; in those districts (and there were several), in which mild Governors assessed and exacted the land-tax with moderation, the country bore all the signs of

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a successful and thriving industry in the culture of the soil.

Runjeet died full of years in the year 1839, transmitting to his posterity what seemed to be a well consolidated kingdom, a powerful army, and a full exchequer. No foe was to be feared without, and no symptom of disaffection within; and this rule had been obtained and maintained by what turns out to have been a mere handful of men. By a census taken since the kingdom has become British, out of 13,000,000 of people, only 300,000 Sikhs were found; and these, be it noted, were men of the same country and clime, and of the same race and origin as the masses who quietly submitted to their rule and to their somewhat arrogant assumption of personal and social superiority.

One is not surprised to find that the English, who first described these Sikhs, describe in terms of enthusiasm their martial qualities, their independent bearing, and their marked superiority, physical and mental, to the people around them, and speak of them as of men whose very frames had grown and dilated from the effects of their religion and their manly independence. Perhaps to some extent the visible superiority of the race may be explained by the consideration, that the men who were ready to accept the simple dogmas of Nanuk, and to throw off alike the debasing subjection of caste and the superstitious veneration of the Mohammedan for his saints' tombs, and his fakirs and dervishes, must have been of superior mental mould to the mass, and that the men, who were ready to join the warlike association of Govind, to devote themselves to the profession of arms, and to cherish the project of achieving their inde-

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pendence by actual war against the sovereigns of Hindostan, must have been men of that physical mould and adventurous disposition to whom also the chances and danger of such a profession and such a project would have charms. From such men the tribe is descended, and by converts from such men its numbers were from time to time swollen; but making allowance for this, it is impossible not to believe that the men, whose sires had been brought up to look on themselves as free men, to love independence and equality amongst themselves, and superiority and rule over others, and to look down with contempt on the superstitions of the masses around them, should, even in their physical development, show the effects of such a training working through successive generations.

The strength of the sect and its doctrines perished in success; republican equality was the essence of the Sikh fraternity, and although the Sikhs rejoiced in the triumphs of their leaders, and of the greatest of them, Runjeet, as the triumphs of the Khalsa, the sacred republic of their nation and faith, yet when they came to have lords and princes, and at last a powerful and absolute sovereign, their real characteristics were gone, and the Khalsa, with the Maharajah Runjeet Singh, was much in the position of France when the coins were struck with La République Française on one side and Napoléon Empereur on the other.

Runjeet's death, moreover, soon rendered visible the inherent weaknesses of such a power and such a state. By his personal qualities his kingdom had been erected and his crown won, and when he died it did not long survive.

He left a son, Kurruk Singh, to succeed him.

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That son was imbecile, and the real authority was vested in Nao Nehal Singh, the son of the new Maharajah; but dissensions, intrigues, and plots of all kinds were ripe in the court and the army, and amongst the great sirdars and zemindars. Kurruk Singh did not long survive his father, and on the return from the funeral rites it was contrived that a tower should fall on the head of Nao Nehal Singh as he passed under it, and he was killed; after that all was dissension, intrigue, civil war, and bloodshed. In this state of things all the prudential maxims of Runjeet were forgotten, and the Sikhs came into collision with the British.

The events of the two wars of the Sikhs with the British, and their result, may be shortly stated.

The sovereign power at Lahore was nominally vested in the infant Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, a son of Runjeet, under the regency of his mother, but really in a committee of officers elected by the soldiery, which claimed to be the true representative and directing authority of the Khalsa. The disposition manifested by the latter made Lord Hardinge, who had succeeded Lord Ellenborough as Governor-General, deem it necessary to assemble an army of observation on the Sutlej. This, although really an unavoidable measure of precaution in the neighbourhood of a soldiery, which had usurped the power of its own sovereign and was, therefore, not likely to be either peaceable or moderate towards the sovereign's allies, gave rise naturally to suspicions and apprehensions.

It was reported and believed throughout the Punjaub, that the British intended to avail themselves of the death of Runjeet and the subsequent distractions,

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to annex the Punjaub as they had annexed Scinde. The Sikh soldiers could not know, as we know, how repugnant were all notions of further territorial extension to Lord Hardinge and to the Home authorities, who were groaning under the load of the last annexation, of which many were ashamed and all were tired.

The assembly of the army of observation by Lord Hardinge was, therefore, believed to be only the prelude to an invasion, which might at any moment be expected. Indeed, an invasion for the purpose of compelling the mutinous Sikh army to disband was a matter in the highest degree probable, even although there should be no thought of annexation of the land itself; but that was precisely the thing in which the Sikh soldiers were interested. The Sikh council of war did, what the British had themselves so often, in fact always, done under similar circumstances; they determined to anticipate by a bold attack the attack on themselves which they deemed imminent. There is reason also to believe that they were encouraged to do this by the councillors of the Regency, who were glad enough to be so rid of the imperious masters whom they had found in their soldiers.

The Sikhs crossed the Sutlej with an army by far the most formidable which the British had ever had to encounter in India. It was a large force of veterans, long trained and disciplined by Runjeet and his European instructors, ably commanded, with good regimental officers, and supplied with a very powerful artillery. Add to this, that the men were, individually, possessed of the highest soldierly qualities, strong, active, brave, and self-confident, and that the

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Hindoo Sepoys in the British service were afraid of them.

It was under these circumstances that the two armies came into collision. Near Ferozepore the hard-fought battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah followed each other on the 18th and 21st of December, 1845, battles in which the Sikhs were the attacking party, and the English were so hard pressed, that it required all that General Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Governor-General could by their presence and personal exertions do to save the British arms from defeat. The battle of Ferozeshah lasted for two days, and ended in the repulse of the Sikhs—but in a repulse only. The English cannot with truth be said to have gained from these victories, as they are called, anything but an escape from defeat, and the honour of holding the battle-field. The enemy repulsed, retired in perfect order across the Sutlej, unmolested by the British, who did not venture to follow them in their retreat. This was a novelty in the military story of the British in India.

The forced inaction of the British continued for a whole month. Even then a division under Sir Harry Smith, advancing up the Sutlej, met with a severe check, and although this was retrieved by his victory at Aliwal a few days later, the Sikhs fought there obstinately and well, and, notwithstanding their very severe losses on that bloody day, were not cowed. The British had their work, and severe work, still before them. A fortnight later the Sikhs were posted in great force in a strong position on the Sutlej at Sobraon, supported by a numerous and well-served artillery. They were here attacked by General Gough,

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every exertion having in the meanwhile been made by the British authorities to strengthen his army, which now amounted to 36,000 men, a very large army indeed when compared with the armies by which former battles had been won by the English in India. A fierce and obstinate battle ensued; but at length the fortunes of the English prevailed. The Sikh positions were forced and their batteries taken, and in their retreat across the river the bridge broke down and immense numbers were drowned, in addition to a great loss in killed and wounded. The loss admitted on the British side—2383 men—showed how severe the fight had been. After this, however, the Sikh army made no further resistance, and the British marched unopposed into Lahore, which they entered as masters on the 20th February, 1846.

Lord Hardinge did not, as Sir Charles Napier and others did, foresee that there was no safety except in the annexation of the Punjaub. He took a middle, and, as he deemed it, a moderate course. He annexed one of the finest provinces, exacted heavy payment for the expenses of the war, and established a regency with treaty stipulations, intended to secure the controlling influence of the British over the Lahore administration. But the Sikhs had been defeated, not crushed; the Khalsa had submitted, but had not been cowed; and the new arrangements proved as temporary and ineffective as Sir Charles Napier had predicted they would be.

Two years had hardly passed when the whole Punjaub was again in a flame. In April, 1848, two British subjects, Anderson and Agnew, were murdered by the direction or under the authority of Moolraj, the

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Governor of the district of Mooltan. With great gallantry, and under circumstances of great difficulty, a young English officer—Lieutenant Edwardes—and General Cortlandt, who had been taken into the English service after the peace, maintained themselves with some native levies which they succeeded in raising; and they even succeeded in inflicting a severe defeat on Moolraj in a great battle. General Whish, the English commander, who, after much delay, appeared before the walls of Mooltan, was repulsed. Matters looked very gloomy for the English, and the old Sikh army everywhere flew to arms, determined to try another fall with their powerful antagonist. Many battles followed which were called victories, but the details of which when they reached England filled all men's minds with misgiving and dread. The British public lost all confidence in Lord Gough, who was thought to have succeeded only by mere dint of bull-dog courage, at a great loss of life, in escaping the disasters to which his want of generalship had exposed his army. Loud clamours arose in London, and the conqueror of Scinde was sent out with all haste to supersede the now unpopular commander-in-chief.

Sir Charles Napier arrived in India to find that whatever might have been the misfortunes and miscarriages of the early part of the campaign, Lord Gough had finished the war triumphantly. In the battle of Chillianwallah on January 13th, 1849, he had gained a complete victory; and about the same time the British had, after an obstinate and prolonged siege, obtained possession of Mooltan. The main Sikh army, in another severe battle—the battle of Goojerat—

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which was fought on the 21st of February, 1849, had been wholly routed and nearly destroyed. The small remains of the army, which had escaped, had been vigorously pursued and effectually prevented from gathering a fresh head, and on the 14th of March had laid down their arms and surrendered unconditionally.

On the 29th of March, 1849, Lord Dalhousie, the new Governor-General, by public proclamation decreed the annexation of the Punjaub to the British dominions.

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CHAPTER XIV.

1850-1856. Lord Dalhousie. Acquisition of British Burmah, Oude, Berar, and Jhansi.

THE annexation of the Punjab was only one of many additions to the British territory made during the eventful viceroyalty of Lord Dalhousie.

A quarrel with the Burmese had grown out of the provisions of the treaty of perpetual friendship and free trade, which had been made at the close of the former war in 1826. The Residents who were sent under the stipulations of the treaty to the Court of Ava had been treated with great indignity, and one of them had even been placed on an island in the Irawaddy without provisions. The policy of the British was, however, long one of peace and forbearance, and it was determined to withdraw from all further diplomatic intercourse, rather than rush into another profitless war and further burthensome acquisitions of territory. The British merchants at Rangoon, however, made loud complaints of the oppressions and exactions to which they were subjected.

Lord Dalhousie was not a man to endure wrong or insult, and was not to be deterred, by the fear of the burthens which more prudent or more timid politicians

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dreaded as the result of increased territory, from assuming the rule of any number of more millions of poor and half-civilized people. It is said, indeed, that he was not unwilling to find any legitimate reason to justify him *in foro conscientiæ* for annexing the Province of Pegu, the remaining sea-board of the Burmese Empire, so as to complete the British line of maritime dominion in the Bay of Bengal and the adjoining sea. Pegu, it will be recollected, was interposed between the British possessions of Aracan and Tenasserim, and it was (so it was said) apprehended that some European power or America might anticipate the British and obtain a position there, in satisfaction of complaints which they also might have good cause for making. However this was, Lord Dalhousie was moved in fact to interfere in consequence of gross outrages committed on the persons of two English captains by the Governor of Rangoon, outrages which were loudly complained of by the mercantile community there, and created intense indignation in India.

Lord Dalhousie sent Commodore Lambert with his squadron to demand an apology, the payment of compensation to the English captains (990*l.*), and the removal of the Governor who had perpetrated the wrong. Commodore Lambert did not succeed; but, on the contrary, fresh insults were given in the contumacious treatment of the English officers who had been deputed to confer with the Burmese, and the peccant Governor was not only not punished, but was treated with greater favour than ever and additional distinction. Commodore Lambert, finding his diplomatic efforts unavailing, seized a ship belonging to the king himself as the most equitable and obvious reprisal,

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and as the surest means of compelling attention to his demands for redress. His ships going down the river were thereupon fired on by the Burmese batteries, and returning the fire soon destroyed the stockades which defended the entrance of the port. All the British and other foreigners fled from Rangoon on board the British ships, a blockade of the port was declared and effected, and the war began.

Commodore Lambert returned to Calcutta to report progress. His prompt and high-handed proceedings were not disapproved of, and he returned authorized and directed to present an ultimatum of the terms required. The justification of this ultimatum is contained in an elaborate minute drawn up by Lord Dalhousie. The substance of it may be briefly summed up thus:—Gross wrong had been done and gross insult offered. For the wrong the most moderate amends were demanded, for the insult nothing further was required than an apology for the treatment to which the officers had been exposed, and a promise to give an honourable reception to our agent deputed under the treaty of 1826. These most just and moderate terms had been evaded. If passed over, the Burmese Government would only be encouraged to further wrongs and oppressions towards British subjects and further insults to the British Government.

"The British power in India cannot safely afford to exhibit even a temporary appearance of inferiority. It cannot consistently with its own safety appear for one day in an attitude of inferiority, or hope to maintain peace and submission among the numberless princes and people embraced within the vast circuit of

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the Empire, if for one day it gave countenance to a doubt of the absolute superiority of its arms and of its continued resolution to assert it."

His Government, he continued, had shown itself sincerely desirous to open a way to reconciliation, it had practised the utmost moderation and forbearance. Notwithstanding intervening events, it had not enhanced its original demand, and it offered the restoration of friendly relations on mild and most reasonable terms. But the ruling idea of prestige again comes out. "If the rejection of those terms should now lead to war, the Government of India must be absolved from the responsibility of hostilities, which it cannot decline without submitting to a discredit of its power, that would place in jeopardy the stability of its authority throughout the East."

The terms which Lord Dalhousie thought he was justified by these considerations in exacting were:—The apology, the 9900 rupees compensation for the captains, the honourable reception of an agent at Rangoon, ten lacs of rupees (100,000*l.*) for the expenses of the expedition and compensation for property taken, and the possession of the towns of Rangoon and Martaban until the ten lacs were paid.

It may well be doubted whether the terms deserved the character of moderation claimed for them; but it could not be doubted, that it was in the highest degree improbable that a court like the Court of Ava would, submit "to a discredit of its power, that would place in jeopardy the stability of its authority throughout its portion of the East."

The war went on, and as before, armaments were sent from Madras and Bengal, but this time with all the

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aid derived from an almost unlimited command of steam power. The expedition was placed under the command of General Godwin, who, as Lieutenant-Colonel Godwin, had taken a distinguished part in the former war. The force was a formidable one, and had not only the advantages of steam communication with the British possessions, and of the fact that the neighbouring provinces of Aracan and Tenasserim were British, but there was no longer the same disappearance of the people of the country from around the invaders. Burmese carpenters, boatmen, coolies, and ponies were obtained, and the bazaars of Rangoon were filled with supplies of food.

The people of Pegu were ready to throw off the Burmese yoke and accept that of the British. The war was, as before, a succession of victories, won notwithstanding a great disparity of numbers. Rangoon was taken and held, then the towns of Martaban, Prome, and Pegu, and the British authority was established and recognized in the whole province of Pegu; but the Burmese Government were still firm, and would not sign any treaty of peace. "If you want peace, go away," was the substance of their answer to every demand. There was at the time a great outcry against the General that he did not, with his means, and with the experience of the last war, make a bold dash at the capital, and in a few weeks compel the concession of the terms to be imposed; but the General and the Governor-General had otherwise learnt the lessons of the last war.

Pegu was thoroughly conquered and was thoroughly annexed in fact by the army, as it was in terms by a proclamation of the Governor-General. The General

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proceeded slowly, cautiously, and surely, towards the capital, which it was as little his wish, as it had been that of General Sir Archibald Campbell in the former war, to be obliged to take. At last submission came, but not in the form of a treaty of peace. There had been a revolution at the Court in favour of a peace party, but still the rulers were firm in this, they would sign nothing, they would pay nothing, they would cede nothing, but they were at last willing to acknowledge *les faits accomplis*, and to declare verbally their intentions to discontinue on their side all warlike operations, and to leave the English undisturbed in the province of which they had taken possession. With this assurance the General and the Governor-General were satisfied; the latter, in fact, deprecated any new treaty; the troops were withdrawn, and there was peace as informally concluded, as the war had been informally begun by Commodore Lambert. It is impossible not to feel that the Burmese acted with spirit and dignity in the closing scenes of the war; they would endure the loss, but they would not voluntarily undergo the humiliation.

Whether Lord Dalhousie was justified in exacting such a heavy penalty and making such a profit in the way of territorial acquisition out of the transaction, was much and fiercely questioned at the time, and has been the subject of much unfavourable criticism since. It may seem heavy and disproportioned to the 900*l.* injury inflicted on the captains; but it must be borne in mind that there was a *casus belli*, that there were real wrongs inflicted on British subjects, and it is not easy to see why we exist as a British nation at all, except for the purposes of mutual defence and assistance,

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even to the extremity of war, against such wrongs. In the litigation of war, as in the litigation before the tribunals—after trial by battle, as well as trial by jury—what the losing party has to pay generally bears no proportion to the original cause of quarrel.

In this case it is to be observed, moreover, that the loss fell entirely on the offending parties—the king, the court, and the military aristocracy. The king lost some of his dignity and the net revenue of the province; the court, nobles, and the captains lost the chance of getting the lucrative posts, which their order had been in the habit of holding in Pegu. No other Burman was prejudicially affected by the conquest. The people of Pegu itself are not to be wholly overlooked in the consideration of this question, and it is certain not only that they acquiesced in the change, but welcomed it, as they well might. They not only lent willing aid to the British forces, but had, even in the course of the war, risen against their Burmese governors and driven them from their towns, and had thereby earned a right to the protection of the British.

It is, indeed, difficult to see how annexation is to be avoided in such a war. In order to obtain supplies and co-operation from the inhabitants, they are successfully invited by promises to come in and act as peaceful and well-disposed subjects of the invader, who is bound not to expose them to the wrath of their former masters.

The acquisition was effected with but little loss of life in battle, and with no great loss from sickness, which, of course, cannot be avoided in military operations in a country of jungles, in such a climate, and with the untractable recklessness which so often makes

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the British soldier disregard all precautions against disease. The expedition, in further striking contrast to the last Burmese war, was equally economical in the expenditure of money. The Indian Empire thus cheaply obtained a strong and secure position on the Indo-Chinese coast, where it is not probable that the Burmese, taught prudence, will seek to molest them. In common with the rest of the world the British merchants have experienced the advantages of free trade with Pegu; and the people of Pegu, in the rapid growth of their towns and ports, in the perfect peace enjoyed under the powerful protection of their new masters, in freedom from exactions, in the unlimited markets opened for the productions of their soil, and in the demand for labour, have had abundant reasons to congratulate themselves on the wisdom, with which they made their choice between their old rulers and their new. It does not appear that as yet they have any aspirations for the restoration of an independent Pegu nationality, which they would be wholly unable to defend; and there are few districts which have so thriven and prospered in agriculture and commerce as the British possessions in Burmah.

Lord Dalhousie also made great acquisitions of territory in India proper, not by war, but in the exercise of the paramount Imperial power which he claimed. The kingdom of Oude had been long cruelly misgoverned. The king had been established, and was supported, by British power, and successive Governor-Generals had felt, that as a protecting power they were in no small degree answerable for the wretchedness and misery, to which the unhappy people of Oude

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had been reduced by the misrule of a court, corrupt, base, and unspeakably wicked.

Each succeeding Governor-General had for many years given solemn warning to the sovereign that there were limits to the endurance of the British power; and none was more emphatic in his admonitions, or more distinct in his declarations of the consequences, than the moderate, unambitious, peaceful Lord William Bentinck. But all was in vain. By the treaties between Oude and the British Government the former had bound itself to listen to the representations of the latter as to the good government of its subjects, in return for the guarantee which was given to support the sovereign of Oude against all enemies, foreign and domestic. But for that guarantee it is not probable that the sovereign of Oude would have escaped the natural consequences of his misrule, the rebellion of his subjects, and the transfer of his power to some ambitious subject taking advantage of the universal discontent. The stipulation referred to was inserted for the protection of the people against the evils, which were dreaded as the not improbable consequences of despotic power in the hands of an Oriental protected from all danger of revolt or revolution, and the British Government were trustees for the people of Oude of the obligation so taken from their sovereign.

The patience of the Government was at length exhausted. It was determined to end the lamentable state of things in Oude. What was to be substituted was the subject of much discussion, and of long and anxious deliberation. Whether to do as had been done

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in Mysore—whether to preserve in some form the show of regal power in Oude—whether it was possible to find some other and better king—were problems carefully investigated; but it was concluded that many evils, with no corresponding good, would certainly arise from the continuance of a double government or a protected sovereign, and that the existing sovereign having by his misconduct justly forfeited his throne, every consideration of regard for the people of Oude rendered it imperative that the English should take the full responsibility of the direct government and administration of the country. It was hardly in truth a state; it had and could have no foreign policy or relations of any kind, and for all military purposes it was completely subordinate to the British power. It existed as a state solely that the king might live in royal luxury, splendour, and dignity, and that offices of emolument and power should continue in the hands of his favourites, and their favourites. It had ceased to perform, or had never performed, the duties of a government, in the protection of the lives, the properties, the industry, and liberties of the people. It was time that these duties should be performed by some one, and there was no one but the British Government to perform them. The king was asked to resign, and formally to cede his royal power in exchange for the most liberal provision, for the maintenance of his luxury and splendour and for his continued personal status, rank, and dignity as an ex-king. He refused. A battalion was marched into Oude and he was quietly deposed, and his country annexed by an edict of Lord Dalhousie, who, in an elaborate proclamation, justified what he

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had done, and challenged the verdict of the princes and people of India on his conduct.

There is no reason to doubt, in fact, that for many years the Governor-Generals, Lord Dalhousie's predecessors, had been shocked by the evils which they witnessed, nor to doubt the veracity of the authentic reports given by the English Residents and others, showing how things had grown from bad to worse, and were rapidly tending to the absolute disorganization of society in that unhappy country. If those things were true, what requires justification, is not the interposition of the British power, but the tardiness of it. The British would not have been justified in further risking the happiness of the millions of people in Oude, in the trial of some new experiment of government by some other protected or subordinate native sovereign; nor would they have been justified as regarded their own subjects in establishing an independent sovereign in Oude and releasing themselves from all responsibilities. There were three courses. A continuance of a dependent native power in some new form under treaty obligations; the establishment of an independent sovereign; or the simple assumption of the entire powers of government. The determination in favour of the last was the obvious, the manly, and the honest course. Lord Dalhousie took it; and Oude became British territory.

In Lord Dalhousie's viceroyalty several other important annexations were made of a different character —annexations made in assertion of the right of *escheat*, as English lawyers would call it—*lapse*, as it is termed in the controversial language of Indian political history—that is, it frequently happened that

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an Indian rajah under British protection died without issue and without heirs of blood, and it was in Lord Dalhousie's time held that, therefore, the succession escheated, or "lapsed," to the British, as the supreme power in India. There is a plausible simplicity about this claim.

In every country there must be an *ultimus hæres*. By the feudal law of tenure the superior lord resumes the possession when there is no tenant to succeed in the holding, and by universal law to prevent scrambling, *bona vacantia* belong to the state, or the sovereign as representing the state.

The British Government were the successors *de facto* of the old Mogul emperors, and it was in accordance with the practice and traditions of Hindostan to consider every state in the peninsula as holding feudally from the Mogul, just as the Pasha of Egypt holds from the Ottoman Porte.

The British Government were *de facto* the supreme Government over the whole of India. In case of a real lapse there is, therefore, no one who can show an equal title to the vacant inheritance; but the grave question which has been raised is whether Lord Dalhousie did not arbitrarily declare or create a lapse in cases where, according to Hindoo principles of legal right, there was no lapse. The subordinate sovereignties, over which the supreme power was claimed for the British, were not held at will, and were not merely offices for life. They were inheritances, and each native sovereign or prince was, in English legal phrase, seised of his dominion to him and his heirs for ever. But in India, amongst the Hindoos, heirship is not confined to the actual

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issue of a man's marriage; and where there are no children begotten, children by adoption are, to all intents and purposes, recognized as the very children, sons and heirs of the adopting fathers. It does seem difficult to understand, how this Hindoo doctrine can be rightfully disregarded in the matter of succession to a Hindoo principality held by a Hindoo prince. It would have been, of course, easy to lay down the principle that each prince was a mere delegate or viceroy of the Calcutta Government, and that on his death the office, as an office of trust, was to be filled only by some competent person, to be selected or approved of by that Government. Such a principle would be very simple and very intelligible, but no such claim has ever been asserted.

The right of the native prince to transmit his power and dignity to his heir, and the right of the heir to succeed, have never been questioned. That the question, of who are the heirs of a Hindoo prince, should be determined by other than the feelings, laws, and usages of the Hindoo people seems wholly irreconcilable with that respect for native feelings, laws, and usages, which has been so loudly vaunted as the cardinal principle of British rule in India.

It is difficult to reconcile it with the good faith which is claimed as the especial characteristic of that rule. It may be urged that the government of hundreds of thousands, or of millions, of people is not a thing to be dealt with like the succession to an estate; but that is beside the question. A child adopted is no more likely to prove a bad ruler than a child born of one of the women of the harem, and the English might as well apply their notions to exclude

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all but the issue born of a monogamous union, as to exclude those whom the Hindoo practice of adoption places upon an equal footing with issue.

In western countries the maxim is, *Pater est quem nuptiæ demonstrant*, a maxim which has almost always precluded inquiry as to the actual paternity. In Hindostan amongst the Hindoos the father may also be shown by the rite of public adoption, and the one rule is as reasonable and intelligible as the others. The only thing to be ascertained is what, in truth, is the rule of inheritance according to the customs and usage of the country, and that rule, once ascertained, ought to be as much respected as any other rule of law. The case in favour of the Hindoo princes, and against the annexation policy of the Calcutta Government, has been made to some extent ludicrous, by the introduction of a sentimental grievance about a Hindoo's belief that his soul will go to the Hindoo's hell, if he has not a son and heir to perform his obsequies. That the Christian governors of India should have the most perfect toleration for the religious practices, and the most unfeigned respect in conduct for all the religious feelings of the natives is a plain duty; but that any government should be regulated in its dealings with state policy towards a prince by that prince's notions of what will happen to himself in another world is carrying religious courtesy somewhat too far.

Lord Dalhousie's doctrine of escheat was applied in his time to the great principality of Sattara, the still greater state of the Rajah of Berar, and to several smaller dominions, including that of Jhansi. It will be recollected that on the final extinction of the

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Peshwaship the then successor of Sevajee (the founder of the Mahratta power) was drawn from his honourable confinement, and received from the British the territory of Sattara. It will also be recollected, that amongst the events of the war were the hostile proceedings of the then Rajah of Berar or Nagpore, who had been placed on the Musnud by the British, but joined in the great Mahratta confederacy against them. He was involved in the common ruin, and became a fugitive and a wanderer, the vacant throne being given by the British to an infant prince of the house of Bensla, selected as the legitimate and proper successor.

In Lord Dalhousie's time the Rajahs of Sattara and Berar died without children. The Rajah of Sattara had, however, adopted a son. Lord Dalhousie came to the conclusion that the Anglo-Indian Government was under no obligation to recognize the right of succession claimed on behalf of such adopted son, that it was their interest not to perpetuate dependent states in the midst of their British territories, and that it would be for the benefit of the people of those states, and for the general good of the people of India at large to extend the British rule to them, and so consolidate the empire. He acted accordingly, and, notwithstanding great difference of opinion strenuously urged, his views were adopted by his Council and by the Home authorities. So Sattara was annexed. The Rajah of Berar died without having adopted any one, and in this respect there was a great distinction between this case and the Sattara case, but another principle of Hindoo law was alleged to be applicable, that is to say, that it was the right and the duty of the principal widow to

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supply the omission and to adopt a son for her deceased husband, such adoption having, as is alleged, the same religious and legal consequences in all respects as an adoption by him in his lifetime.

There seems to be ground for this contention; and if the Hindoo law of sonship by adoption is to be recognized at all, it is difficult to see upon what principle it is to be adopted with restrictions, or how the one adoption is to be distinguished from another, both being equally valid by the only law by which the validity is to be tested. In matters of state, however, strict logic does not always prevail, and if the Berar case had stood by itself, it would have, perhaps, caused but little surprise, if the Government had refused to recognize the right of the widow of a deceased feudatory to regulate by her caprice the succession to a great state.

By means of the escheat of Berar, Lord Dalhousie acquired an immense territory in the very heart of India, joining together the three Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras. The other acquisitions by way of lapse were territorially of small importance, but all tended to consolidate and round the British dominion.

At the close of Lord Dalhousie's administration India not British still comprehended a vast extent of country; if it had been united, compact, and independent, it might well have proved formidable, but the different portions of non-British India were separated, and the principal native states surrounded and commanded by British territory. Even if they had been independent, a combination of the native sovereigns against the British would have been as improbable as

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a combination of Sweden, Roumania, Persia, and Khiva against Russia would be; but they were not independent. By the existing treaties any attempt to form such a combination or any alliance or combination whatever would have been an act of direct hostility; and by the same treaties the growth of any one of the states at the expense of another was absolutely forbidden. It was permitted to no power but the British to conquer, to acquire, to annex; and the career of a Runjeet Singh or a Hyder Ali was no longer open to an ambitious chief or an unscrupulous soldier. Every one of the native courts had a resident or political agent to watch, direct, and control it. It would have been very difficult to conceal from him any intrigues of the sovereign or his court; and an intrigue detected would probably have been followed by immediate deposition. It was, therefore, but natural that Lord Dalhousie should in triumphant minutes of council bequeath to his successors the peaceful cares of an empire enlarged, consolidated, firm, and secure, and that his successor, Lord Canning, should look forward to a quiet administration, the only duty of which would be to promote, by wise legislation, improved institutions and public works, the material and moral progress of a prosperous and contented population.

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CHAPTER XV.

1857. Lord Canning. The Sepoy Mutiny.

LORD CANNING was rudely awakened from his dream of peace and prosperity. The sky was suddenly overcast by blackest clouds, and a storm, such as no previous Governor-General had ever witnessed, burst over his head. The Indian Empire was shaken, so friends feared and so foes boasted, to its very foundations.

In May, 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny began, and it was not until after the lapse of many weary and arduous months that the British power was finally re-established and the whole country pacified. It had often been anticipated as a trial which the British Government would have some day or other to go through, that having conquered by means of the Bengal army, they would have to conquer the Bengal army itself, and that day at last came.

The Bengal army was in many respects the finest portion of the large native force maintained by the British; but for many years before 1857 it had been in a very unsatisfactory state—in a state of chronic disaffection, ready at any moment to burst out into open mutiny. The cause, at the very bottom of all this discontent, was that which is always at the bottom of every military revolt—a question

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of pay and privileges. The Bengal Sepoy was enlisted only for a special service; he was bound by his military oath to "march" anywhere, but not to go where he could not march, that is, not bound to go anywhere by sea—not even across the Bay of Bengal. A sea voyage had many terrors for him, particularly when he was, as most of the Bengal Sepoys were, of high caste, it being scarcely possible on board ship to observe those nice rules as to the preparation and eating of food, which cannot be violated without that most dreadful of all penalties—the loss of caste. The traditional respect, shown by the English for the usages of caste, had also enabled the Bengal Sepoy to establish exemption from all such military work as was derogatory to his high social position. When he was marched beyond the British frontier he was, moreover, entitled to very considerable additional allowances, or batta, and there had been a further understanding that when the prices of certain things, part of his rations, exceeded certain limits, there should be a small addition to his pay. The British frontier was advanced so as to include the Punjaub and Oude, and the Sepoy stationed in these places found that he lost his additional batta, and that the victories which he had helped to gain resulted in a serious pecuniary loss to himself. There had been also an economy of the public monies to the loss of the Sepoy in respect of the small addition or allowance before mentioned.

These things had more than once led to open insubordination on the part of Sepoy regiments affected by them; sometimes the quarrel had been got over by concessions, which, of course, tended

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to encourage the mutinous spirit; sometimes it had been ended by stern military repression, which increased the disaffection. The most dangerous result was, that the soldiers of the several regiments had got into the habit of corresponding by letter or by emissaries on the subject of their real or supposed grievances, and had established, either expressly or by an understood general consent, a trades' union to support each other against their paymaster, the Government. The composition of the Bengal Sepoy army gave a wonderful facility for this kind of combination. It was composed substantially of the two highest castes, Brahmins and Rajhpoots, and of Mohammedans, who were much Brahminized, and was recruited almost exclusively from the North-West Provinces and from Oude, the Rajhpoots and Brahmins of which were amongst the most military races in India. They were, to a great extent, hereditary soldiers of the Bengal army, from the same villages and from the same families. The same military qualities which had led the English to select them for the Bengal army proper, had also made them desired for all the contingent battalions maintained in the protected states of Holkar, Scindiah, Bhopal, and Rajhpootana, all of which were therefore joined in one homogeneous mass of common origin, caste, and religion, with common feelings, the same sympathies, and the same prejudices. The Bombay army was, to no inconsiderable degree, recruited from the same districts.

It has been mentioned that the terms of enlistment had precluded the Government from sending the Bengal Sepoys anywhere by sea without their consent, and

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this had long been felt by the military authorities of Calcutta as a great defect in the constitution of their army. Their services might be required in British Burmah, in the Straits Settlements, or in China, or need might be to send them rapidly by steam to some other parts of the empire, and it was with much reason thought that it was a very unsatisfactory state of things, that the largest and finest portion of the native army should not be available for every duty and for every emergency. To meet this to some extent a few regiments had been enlisted specially for general service. It was at last thought that the time was come to make this universal, and all new recruits for all the regiments were ordered to be enlisted accordingly for general service anywhere they might be called upon. It was plausibly contended that this could not be complained of; it did not affect the old soldiers, towards whom there was no breach of faith, and the new ones could not of course object to a condition subject to which they voluntarily enlisted, all service in the Anglo-Indian army being essentially voluntary.

Although plausible, this view was not sound. The Government did not take sufficient note of the nature and extent of the trades' union feeling which would necessarily be excited. No trades' union, if it can, will allow persons, not members of their body, to work in the same shop with them, and every trades' union is prepared to resort to the extremest measures to exclude all such intruders. An armed trades' union has of course the same feelings and the same instinctive policy. A regiment, that has privileges which it holds dear, feels that, as it gradually fills with recruits enlisted on different terms, it is becom-

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ing more and more at the mercy of its masters. The privileged men have no confidence that faith will even be kept with them individually; they feel that they are being gradually circumvented by state-craft, and squeezed out by new favourites, and they have naturally and legitimately an *esprit de corps*, which makes them resent the change in the position of the regiment and of the army.

The Bengal Sepoys were also aware that it had been proposed and was probably intended to have a large infusion of Goorkas, men without caste, of different race and faith, men of whom Sir Charles Napier had boasted that they would care little for the "sex of a beef-steak" that came in their way, while the Bengal Sepoys were men to whom the killing of a cow was the most detestable of crimes.

It was scarcely possible under these circumstances, but that the Bengal army should be one mass of disaffection, even if the circumstances affecting them merely in their position as soldiers had stood alone. They were, however, not merely soldiers. They were principally high caste men, their officers almost exclusively so, and the soldiers not of high caste looked up with a superstitious respect to those that were. The measures of the Government had been for many years well calculated to alarm and shock high caste men, nor could it be otherwise; for all good government, all national progress is essentially hostile to the pretensions and privileges of caste.

Every day the Brahmin felt more and more that in the eyes of the Government, before the laws, before the tribunals, in the competition of life, the

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despised castes were becoming his equals. There were special laws made against him. He was no longer allowed to lead widows to the funeral pile. Some of the more offensively licentious rites and practices of his idolatry were discountenanced, if not repressed. He was not allowed to ruin, by disinheriting, a child who abandoned his father's idols. A soldier was no longer liable to be drummed out of his regiment for turning Christian. There were schools and colleges from which the young men of rank and wealth came out infidels and scoffers at all that was most holy in the sacred books of orthodox Brahminism, and the accomplishments, which these young men acquired in the godless colleges of the Sahibs, gave them the monopoly of the places of honour and emolument, which were more and more thrown open to the ambition of the natives.

Missionary enterprise was everywhere active, and if it did not succeed in making Christians, it did at all events succeed to a great extent in making Freethinkers. The Bengal Government had been an Anglo-Brahmin government. It was ceasing to be so. Whatever there was of pride of caste, whatever there was of zealous Hindooism, whatever there was of that hatred to other faiths which commonly is so inseparable from strong religious feeling, was shocked and roused by all that had been and was going on under infidel rule. The Bengal army was full of men imbued with all this pride of caste and the most passionate Hindooism, and it was very unfortunate that while the men were in this state of mind, officers in the army thought themselves called upon by their paramount

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obligations as Christian men, to preach to their own Brahmin soldiers that their only hope of salvation was in conversion to the Christian faith.

It might have been expected that the strong Mohammedan element which existed in India, and in the Indian army, would have been a powerful counter-influence to that of Brahminism; but the Mohammedans in India had not escaped the influence of high caste superiority, and as Mohammedans they had been and were in a state of chronic disaffection to the existing rule. It is one of the most striking and universal of the characteristics of the followers of the Prophet that they have, as Mussulmans, a strongly-developed feeling akin to, and as intense as, that feeling of nationality which pervades western peoples as Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, and so on. "The Mohammedans are united in feeling throughout India. If a Hindoo is glad, nobody but his own nearest people will sympathize, but if a Mussulman be glad, all Mussulmans rejoice." The supercession of the great Mogul Empire by that of the Franks could not be otherwise than bitterly humiliating to all true Mohammedans, and it would be strange indeed if the true believers could not be easily excited against the infidels, who had intruded into the high places of the faithful.

Many circumstances conspired at the time at which our story has arrived to cause this state of feeling to be artificially excited and worked upon.

Although the annexation of Oude was made without difficulty, and by the mere show of a small military force, it was of course not submitted to with perfect acquiescence and resignation. There was a Begum of

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Oude who still cherished hopes that her family might be restored to the position from which they had been so ruthlessly deposed, and there were, as there always are in like case, some persons who retained their fidelity as old servants, courtiers, and retainers of the exiled king. In settling the affairs of the newly-acquired province of Oude, the administrators had proceeded in the spirit which had for the last generation pervaded the school of the North-West administrators. These men had seen, probably with truth, that that which was at the very foundation of all landed property in India was the village community of cultivating proprietors, the origin of which was lost in remote antiquity, but which had continued to subsist under every rule and through every oppression. To them, talookdars, zemindars, or whatever else were the names of those who claimed to be the lords and owners of the talookdaries, zemindaries, or other districts, were mere intruders and usurpers, who had in bad times been able to establish themselves as little despots by usurpation and encroachment, partly at the expense of the State, partly at the expense of the poor ryots. The cardinal rule of policy of the authorities of the North-West Provinces was that of restoring the ryot to his just ancestral position of an independent freeholder, holding direct from the State at a moderate rentcharge.

There was thought to be even greater reason for applying this principle to Oude than there had been in the older provinces; for certainly in many cases, at all events in Oude, the existing talookdars and lords owed their lordships to recent acts of wrong, perpetrated during the many years of wretched misrule which had desolated that land, and their titles would

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hardly bear investigation. There was a natural desire to do something for the good of the ryots who had been so grievously ill-used, but the reforming hand moved with too much haste and too little prudence. The talookdars of Oude, men with strong forts in places difficult of access, and with large bands of lawless retainers accustomed to violent deeds, were all discontented and ripe for revolt, while the ryots were too weak, too disorganized, too much accustomed to their local tyrants, to come forward in support of the policy which the Government had devised for their benefit. Oude, too, was filled with the disbanded soldiers of the king. They had been a licentious and turbulent soldiery, to a great extent the real masters of the country, and were now lawless men, bitterly hostile towards their new rulers, and ready to join any leader who would promise them pay and plunder.

The Ranee of Jhansi, who had been made the bitter enemy of the British rule, by the annexation of her small states by Lord Dalhousie, was a woman of great energy, of great courage, greatly loved by the people of Jhansi, and much esteemed by the nobles and chiefs of the neighbouring states of Bundelcund, and was ripe for any plot, prepared for any enterprise, and ready herself to take the field.

There was also a person whose name has since become painfully familiar to the British ear, a personage of great wealth and distinction, Nana Sahib of Bithoor. He had been (as he believed, and it must be confessed believed not without apparent cause) foully wronged by the British authorities. He was the adopted son of that Peshwa Badjee Rao, who had, as we have seen, ventured to war with the British, had lost his throne,

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and involved the Mahratta Empire itself in his ruin.

By the treaty made with him, in consideration of his cession of territory and abdication of the Peshwaship, amongst other things an annual sum of eight lacs was assigned for the support of himself and his wife and family. On the death of the ex-Peshwa, the Government determined that this was a mere life grant which ceased with him, while on the part of Nana Sahib, his adopted son and heir, it was contended with great appearance of reason that according to the true intent and meaning of the treaty and in all good faith the eight lacs was a perpetual annuity, that the territories had been ceded in perpetuity by the Peshwa for himself, his heirs, and successors, and that the annuity was the equivalent rentcharge to the "Peshwa and his family," that is, to him and to those heirs and successors for whom and in whose name as well as his own he had made the cession treaty. It was urged that if there was any ambiguity in the treaty it ought not to be construed in a pettifogging spirit, and that if it had been meant to be a mere life annuity it should have been so expressed in unmistakable terms.

Whatever would have been the decision of an impartial tribunal on this question, it is obvious that to Nana Sahib himself there could have been no doubt of the justice of his claim, and to him the refusal of it must have seemed an act of unmitigated injustice. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that he cherished the most vindictive feelings towards those by whom he had been wronged, that he brooded over his wrongs, and that to avenge himself became the great object and absorbing passion of his life.

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Nana Sahib was himself a Brahmin, but his confidential and principal adviser and agent was a Mohammedan, Azimoollah Khan, who had spent some years in London advocating his master's cause, and acquiring such knowledge as a popular Oriental of good address and pleasing manner, and well received in society, would be able to get in England. He appears to have been a man of some considerable talent, but his mission to England had been a failure. He returned to India with those feelings towards the Government, which would be natural to such a man, in whom the sense of personal mortification was mingled with the sense of present wrong to his chief, and of the past and enduring degradation to which his religion and his country had been subjected by men alien in blood, alien in language, and alien in religion.

What was the first form of the conspiracy is not known and cannot be guessed at; but it is reasonably certain that Nana Sahib, the Begum of Oude, the Ranee of Jhansi, and the leading talookdars of Oude, communicated and corresponded, and that Azimoollah Khan, the Mohammedan adviser of the Brahmin Mahratta Nana, was an admirable agent for bringing Mohammedans and Hindoos into the scheme. These persons had no difficulty in finding—amongst Hindoos and Mohammedans alike—priests, fakirs, and other emissaries, full of zeal for the work of the good cause, whom they sent into every regiment to stir up the smouldering discontent into a flame. Soon the air was full of rumours attributing to the British the darkest designs against their religion, whether Brahmin or Mussulman, and the wildest stories were circulated of atrocities committed and of atrocities

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intended in furtherance of the great object of the British to make the people Christians. These stories were believed. The Sepoys were assured that the princes and chiefs of India were eager to get rid of the hateful yoke, and assurances came from the army to the princes and chiefs of their readiness to make common cause with them in a holy war against the infidel Sahibs. Mohammedans and Hindoos were for the time, in fact, ready to make common cause against men, who no more scrupled to eat the flesh of swine than they did to eat the flesh of cows sacrilegiously killed to satisfy their indiscriminate appetites.

Prophecies were recollected or invented which had predicted the ruin of the British reign after a hundred years, and the hundred years were about to expire. An ingenious device was hit on, the sending of chupatties, or small cakes, from village to village with a mysterious intimation to each to bake and send on. Nothing was said, and no one understood what it meant, but every one concluded that it was a sign of something great. The mysterious uncertainty added to the popular impression; for this, at all events, was well understood—that it portended no good to the existing authorities—and thus it was shown that the enemies of those authorities could have their signals transmitted securely throughout the land.

It is very probable, however, that all these ingredients might have been thrown into the cauldron and produced nothing more than a few offensive bubblings over, had it not been for one act of signal imprudence, which caused a sudden conflagration and explosion of the mass. The Enfield rifles, with their appropriate cartridges, were introduced into the native army, and

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it oozed out, according to the fact, that animal fat had been inadvertently used in the composition of some of the cartridges,—animal fat, to touch which was pollution. This was more than sufficient to prove the truth of all that had been alleged, and all the efforts of the Government to disabuse the minds of the men were fruitless. There were doubtless others who took care that such efforts should fail.

It does not fall within the compass or the scope of this narrative to give the detailed incidents, the blunders, if they were blunders, the miscalculations, the official shortcomings, the mistakes of commanders, which are found recorded in the narratives of those eventful days. There must, on the ordinary calculation of chances, be in every such crisis a certain amount of blunders, miscalculations, shortcomings, and mistakes, and it would be useless to look to them as the cause of that epidemic of mutiny which now spread. The contagion might perhaps have been stamped out, but it would not have prevailed if the conditions favourable to the infection had not existed.

It must also be noticed that the small European army was dispersed all over India, Madras, Burmah, Bombay, the Punjaub, and the hill-country of Simla. A considerable number had been sent on an expedition to Persia, in order to compel that country to desist from an attack on Herat. The arsenals and treasuries were under the guard of Sepoys; and as to the treasuries, it must be further noted that all receipts and payments were made in hard silver money, and the necessity or usages of the service required that there should be large cash balances, hoards of actual money in the local treasuries, of which there were

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many, inviting the evil-disposed and promising them an abundant loot.

The native troops of the Bengal army were about 120,000, including a highly-trained and skilful body of artillerymen and a very numerous and effective cavalry. They held almost every strong place in the country. At Delhi, in many respects the most important place in Upper India, there was not a single European corps. At Agra, the capital of the North-West Provinces, there was one weak regiment of Europeans. Sir Henry Lawrence had at Lucknow one regiment of European infantry and ninety artillerymen. At the important station of Allahabad there were some invalid artillery. Saugor, the key of Central India, containing a large and valuable arsenal, had an European garrison of some sixty or seventy artillerymen.

In this state of things the great Mutiny began. Early in the year some regiments had been disbanded for insubordination, but the final outbreak may be considered as having begun at Meerut on the 10th of May, 1857. Eighty-five troopers of the 3rd regiment of cavalry had been tried and convicted of mutinous insubordination, connected with a refusal to receive the new cartridges after it had been clearly explained to them, as the fact was, that there really was nothing objectionable in their composition. Some were sentenced to two years', some to five years' imprisonment, and they were placed in irons on the 9th of May. The next day the native troops, infantry and cavalry, at the station rose, and after firing on their own officers, many of whom were killed and others wounded, set fire to their cantonments, and began to

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massacre all the Europeans, men, women, and children, they could lay their hands on, and then made their way to Delhi. The most inexplicable fact in the whole history of the Mutiny is, that while the native force at Meerut, who did these things, did not exceed 2700 men, there were actually 1700 Europeans at the same place. In other days 1700 Europeans would have sufficed to conquer an Indian kingdom, but the mutineers did, in the presence of this European force, rise, burn, and massacre, and after an ineffectual show of pursuit, make good their escape to Delhi.

The native regiments in the cantonments outside the city of Delhi soon made common cause with their friends. The population, at least the populace of the city, joined them, and the princes, the members of the family of the old Emperor, placed themselves at the head of the movement; the Emperor himself was ninety years old. The green flag of the Moguls was unfurled, and the re-establishment of the old dynasty proclaimed. The city was completely in the possession of the mutineers, and the new reign was inaugurated by the indiscriminate massacre of the Europeans. The news was spread by rumour all over India, with a speed scarcely less than that of the electric telegraph by which it was conveyed to the authorities; and the Mutiny spread almost as rapidly.

"The fabric of Government," writes Mr. Raikes, "was falling to pieces all over the North-West Provinces. High officials, accustomed to command the obedience of millions, were hiding in the jungles, hunted by their own guards, or holding desperate positions against hopeless odds. Early in July events hurried on which drove Mr. Calvin (the Lieutenant-

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Governor) and every other living Christian, man, woman, or child, at Agra and within a radius of a hundred miles round about, into the fort, glad enough to lose their property and seek the only shelter for life now remaining. Mutiny, like a belt of fire, surrounded us. On a gentle curve, overhanging the right bank of the river Jumna, stands the fort of Agra, with its high red sandstone walls, deep ditch, and drawbridge, it looks now, what it really was when the Emperor Akbar rebuilt it in 1570, impregnable. Whatever remained unscathed from Meerut to Allahabad, either of Englishmen or of their works, was conglomerated here."

In that fort the refugees remained as in an ark of safety, until the flood of the Mutiny had begun to subside.

At Lucknow the Commissioner, Sir Henry Lawrence, was compelled, by the defection of his native troops, to shut himself up in the residency, where, with all the European men, women, and children, he was beleaguered, the whole of Oude having risen and joined the rebel cause.

At Cawnpore (the station nearest to the residence of the Nana Sahib) a regiment of infantry and another of cavalry mutinied on the night of the 4th of June. All the other native troops in the cantonments joined the mutineers, and Nana Sahib, placing himself at their head, soon gathered together a very large force. Sir Hugh Wheeler, with the European officers and with a small body, about 170 troops, entrenched himself with the women and children in his cantonments on the plain, a place as little capable of defence as could well be, commanded by positions which were

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occupied by the enemy in overwhelming numbers, and, unfortunately, with no water, save a well, which could not be reached except under fire. Here, however, the small garrison held out until the 26th of June, when the remnant of the garrison surrendered themselves by formal capitulation to Nana Sahib, who treacherously caused all the men to be massacred at that time, and subsequently, when himself defeated and about to fly, also murdered the women and children, whose lives in the first massacre were spared by him.

This was the only instance during the whole of the Mutiny in which any place, however weak, defended by any European garrison, however small, was taken; and there is much reason to believe that with common foresight in the selection of a position for defence, and with greater energy at the beginning, even at Cawnpore the commandant and his small force would have been able to hold their position until relief came.

The Commander-in-Chief, General Anson, lost no time in pushing on towards Delhi with a small European force, which he had with him at Simla, but on his march succumbed to an attack of cholera, to which disease his successor, Sir Henry Barnard, also fell a victim before the close of the operations against Delhi. The European troops at Meerut were also put in motion by Brigadier Wilson, and having on the way received and repulsed two attacks of the enemy on the 30th and 31st of May, joined the other body on the 7th of June. The united force, which did not exceed 3000 Europeans, and a detachment of Goorkas amounting to 500 men, found a large force of the

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enemy strongly entrenched. They atttacked and forced the entrenchments, from which the mutineers were driven away with the loss of twenty-six guns, ammunition, stores, and tents, and, immediately pursuing them, drove them from a ridge of high ground close to Delhi, behind which were the military cantonments. They continued to hold this position, seizing Delhi, as it were, by the throat, but having no sufficient means to dispossess the enemy.

The way in which the small body of men held that ridge during the months of June, July, and August, biding their time, was itself a sufficient indication of the ultimate hopelessness of the rebel cause; but the real nature of the conflict was, perhaps, more strikingly shown by the fact, that the reinforcements were able to come up by driblets traversing hundreds of miles of country, and that the camp was always fully and abundantly supplied. If there had been any active or real hostility in the population around, this would have been impossible.

The population behind consisted mainly of the protected Cis-Sutlej Sikh states, between whom and the British there never had been cause of quarrel or offence, since they had first invoked the protection of the latter against the encroachments of Runjeet Singh; beyond them were the Punjaubees, the former subjects of Runjeet, who had every reason to be satisfied with their change of masters. What remained of the old army of the Sikhs, and of the old spirit of the Khalsa, after the great battles of the Sutlej, and after the lapse of eleven years spent in peaceful pursuits under a settled Government, had certainly no sympathies either with the green flag of the Mogul, or with the

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pretensions of the Poorbeas, as the Sepoys were called.

Delhi was the rallying-point for mutineers and rebels from all parts of India, but the small British force outside, which was occasionally reinforced from the Punjaub but cut off from all other aid, held its own, repulsing with great loss the attacks made by overwhelming numbers from the city, until General Nicholson came up from the Punjaub on the 24th of August, having routed a large body of mutineers.

General Nicholson's army consisted only of 1000 Queen's troops, 200 native cavalry, and a battery of artillery. On the 3rd of September the siege-train, long waited for, at length arrived, and further reinforcements of Sikhs and other Punjaubees brought up the effective force of all arms—Europeans and natives—to nearly 10,000 men.

A few days sufficed for placing the siege batteries in position. After two days' incessant firing of shot and shell, practicable breaches were effected, and the assault was made on the morning of the 14th of September. A large portion of the assaulting force succeeded at once in establishing itself inside one of the gates of the city, called the Cashmere Gate, which was blown open by means of bags of gunpowder. The city itself was however, for several days obstinately defended; street after street had to be taken, and it was not until the 20th of September that the royal palace fell and the city was completely won. The rebel forces poured out of the city, to find their way down to their friends in the lower Doab and in Oude. The old Mogul Emperor was made prisoner; his son and grandson were traced to their hiding-place and

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taken by Lieutenant Hodson, the commander of a body of irregular cavalry called Hodson's Horse. Lieutenant Hodson, being pressed by an excited and threatening mob which gathered around him, shot the princes with his own hand. These princes had personally directed the slaughter of the Europeans in Delhi, and so had well-merited their fate. Lieutenant Hodson, surrounded by a furious multitude of armed men bent on rescuing the princes, had, as he conceived, no alternative but to kill them on the spot. The mob were at once cowed by this vigorous proceeding; the bodies were publicly exposed, and the whole population of the city subsided into an unresisting submission to the British authorities. The people of Delhi and of India now knew, that all that had been left of the name and show of the old imperial dynasty by Lord Wellesley was gone for ever.

Before the English Government were able to assume the offensive, it may be considered that, substantially, the whole of the Bengal native army had risen and was in open arms against their masters. A few regiments, or parts of regiments, had remained faithful, but not so as substantially to affect the generality of the above statement. All the contingents in the neighbouring native states, Gwalior, Indore, Bhopal, and others, joined. The contingent force of Gwalior alone consisted of five companies of artillery, with a magazine, a siege-train, two cavalry and seven infantry regiments—a formidable army in itself.

The police in the British territories was not more faithful than the Sepoy, and all the "budmashes," that is to say, all the scoundrel populace of the large cities, including the inmates of the gaols, which

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were opened, were with them. In India there have been at all times hereditary tribes, castes of robbers and thieves, against whom the English had taken the most energetic and severest measures. These, of course, made common cause with the Sepoys; but besides these it is undoubted that a very large portion of the aristocracy of the North-West Provinces—men known as rajahs, nawabs, talookdars, princes, and lords of the country—joined in the movement, and there were but few who had the courage, if they had the wish, to remain actively loyal to the Sahib Raj. In the neighbouring native states, although the great sovereigns stood aloof, and probably themselves did not really wish to see a new sovereign at Delhi, or to assist in placing India at the feet of the leaders of a mutinous army, the cause of the latter was the popular cause, especially with all who had arms in their hands. In Oude it became essentially a national uprising of all that was influential in the country; and the regular and irregular troops which invested Lucknow were at one time estimated at no less than 200,000 men.

On the other side of the British territory is Bundelcund, a hill district about 200 miles from S.E. to N.W., and 150 miles from N.E. to S.W., held by a great number of petty chiefs under British supremacy, a roadless country of fastnesses and forts, filled with a very turbulent population, the name Bundela having to the lowland Hindoo much the signification of a Cateran in Scotland or a Moss-trooper on the Border. Many of the chiefs and almost the whole of the population of this commanding central plateau took part in what seemed to be a general scramble for the pos-

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sessions of the British, and the disorder reached to the neighbouring districts of the Saugor and Nerbudda territories.

There were some attempts at disturbances at Benares and in other parts of Bengal, and some agitation amongst the Mohammedan population of Hyderabad, the Nizam's capital. There were alarms and signs of mutiny and of disaffection even in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, but these were so speedily repressed that they may be dismissed from the narrative with this mention of them.

In the Punjaub the Bengal regiments in garrison mutinied or showed evident signs of mutiny, but the authorities there, warned by the electric telegraph of what had occurred at Meerut and Delhi, took such prompt measures that all the forts and strong places were secured, and the disaffected regiments disarmed. One unfortunate body of Sepoys, that endeavoured to make its way through the country towards Delhi, was almost entirely destroyed by the native Punjaubees, who rose upon and beset them.

The position of affairs at the worst may be summed up thus: the North-West Provinces, with a territory of 80,000 square miles, an annual land revenue or rent of 4,000,000*l.* sterling, and a population of 30,000,000, were, for the time, wrested from the hands of the British; Oude, with a territory of 28,000 square miles, a land revenue of 660,000*l.* sterling, and a population of 8,000,000 was lost; and the British had lost their hold over the people of Bundelcund, Gwalior, Indore, Bhopal, and the Rajhpoot states. In fact, the mutiny extended from the Nerbudda to the Sutlej; but the original dominion of Bengal,

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Behar, and Orissa, the Presidency of Madras and that of Bombay, the valley of the Indus and its tributaries, Assam and British Burmah, and all the sea-coast and ports remained in the undisputed possession of the British. Mysore was still administered by them; their influence was paramount over the Nizam and the Sikh states; and the great central province of Berar, which they had annexed, was scarcely disturbed.

There were abundant elements of mischief, but the Delhi princes, Nana Sahib, the talookdars of Oude, and the officers of the revolted regiments never had the slightest chance of forming a stable government. They had bands which plundered, but the organization of a regular system of revenue which would enable them to keep permanently on foot a large army, the organization of the army itself, of either a civil or military staff, or of a commissariat, was wholly beyond their power. They could produce a chaos, but not evoke order out of that chaos.

It was quite certain that that must happen, which Mr. Raikes describes as having, in fact, happened.

"The predatory classes, the Goojurs, the Mewatees, felt instinctively that their day had come. Their natural enemy, the magistrate, had perished, or was slain. Forthwith they sallied forth to pursue their hereditary vocation of plunder with the utmost impartiality, robbing alike the European running for his life, or the Sepoy carrying off his booty. The great agricultural classes at first looked on the English with unfeigned compassion. They showed it in a hundred instances; but as the course of events hurried on they began to think it no bad change, if only they could avoid revenue payment for the future. But even this

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natural feeling yielded to a few weeks' experience of anarchy. The zemindar soon found that it was better to pay land-tax and receive protection than day and night to fight for his possessions with every scoundrel in the country-side, and thus the bulk of the tax-paying agricultural proprietors in the Doab, after the fall of Delhi, welcomed their English masters back with unfeigned satisfaction. Still more did the moneyed classes rejoice to see the English rule restored. Native bankers and merchants, who had long been investing their savings in land, were either murdered or scared away; things grew worse and worse, until every man, but the professional robber or Dacoit, longed for the return of the magistrate, although he was also the collector of the Government revenue. The robbers joined the straggling Sepoy bands, while the rest of the people hastened to pay up all arrears of revenue into our treasuries."

A striking illustration of the preceding observations is to be found in the fact that while the land revenue of the Indian Government for the year 1856-57 was 17,748,810*l.*, it amounted during the years 1857-58 and 1858-59, the two years of the Mutiny and consequent war, to no less than 18,317,337*l.* and 18,123,659*l.* respectively.

Serious then as the crisis was, there never was really the danger to the British power or supremacy of which such exaggerated apprehensions prevailed. One-fourth of the territory was for a time overrun by hostile bands; but through three-fourths the British authority was undisturbed, and all went on its usual routine. Civil and criminal courts sat and administered justice, and the revenue was collected

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without interruption. Had not paramount considerations of duty rendered it necessary to act with promptitude and energy to rescue English men, women, and children from the dangers to which they were exposed, to give support to those native chiefs and landholders who still remained faithful to the Sahibs, and to restore order to the distracted provinces, the Government of Calcutta might well have allowed the fury of the storm to spend itself, and bided its time for the restoration of its authority.

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CHAPTER XVI.

1857—1858. **Lord Canning. End of the Sepoy Mutiny.**

DURING the months which had elapsed since the English had first sat down before Delhi, rumours had once or twice circulated that it had fallen, and such rumours had probably tended to check the epidemic of insurrection. After the actual fall it was felt everywhere in India that the British had really won the game; what remained might be tedious, laborious, and costly, but was a mere matter of time, labour, and expense.

In the south, meanwhile, the Governor-General had lost no time in securing the important position of Allahabad at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna. A regiment of Madras Europeans (1st Madras Fusiliers) had been called up from that Presidency, and although the town was in the possession of the insurgents, the safety of the fort was considered as secured, when it was reported occupied by 300 of that force, supported by a regiment of Ferozepore Sikhs. This small advanced guard of the British forces was under General Neill, who halted on his way for a few days to stamp out a mutiny of regiments—Sepoy and Sikh—at Benares, and to terrify the vast population of that

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great city into continued submission to the civil power established there.

General Havelock was sent on to Allahabad with a small force of Europeans, and reached that place on the 30th of June. On the 7th of July he was able to advance with a movable column of 1000 Europeans, and about 200 Sikhs and irregular cavalry, and join a corps of 800 troops, which had been previously sent forward towards Cawnpore. With this small force he had no difficulty in defeating Nana Sahib in several engagements, retaking Cawnpore, and taking the Nana's palace at Bithoor. Leaving Brigadier-General Neill in command at Cawnpore with a force of 300 Europeans, and some guns, which sufficed to re-establish order in the town and a small district around it, General Havelock essayed with a small force of 1500 men to force his way to the beleaguered city of Lucknow.

After an unsuccessful sortie, Sir Henry Lawrence and his small following, with all the women and children, had taken refuge in the Residency of Luck now, the only place which the English were able to hold in all Oude, and to which nothing but their courage could have given even the semblance of a place of strength. Here Sir Henry Lawrence was killed; and here, for month after month, Colonel Inglis, who succeeded to the military command, maintained himself against the incessant attacks of the numbers by whom he was surrounded. On the 16th of August he reported that the enemy had got their 18-pounder guns within 150 yards of the English position, and the people with him were: effective Europeans, 350; sick and wounded, 120; women and children, 450; natives, 300; the last

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losing confidence—and provisions sufficient, on half rations, to last until the 10th of September.

Repelling an attempted assault with great loss to the enemy, he effected a successful sortie, spiked the enemy's big guns, and secured a large supply of provisions, especially bullocks for the Europeans; and a cheerful confidence was again restored. On the 1st of September he had again to report that his force was daily diminishing from the enemy's fire, and his defences daily growing weaker, but that he had reduced the rations, which, considering the great diminution in their numbers from casualties, might be made to hold out until the 20th or 21st of September. On the 5th of September the successful repulse of another great attack gave fresh spirit to the men, and it was thought that some of their provisions might be made to last until the 1st of October.

The force with which Havelock attempted to reach and relieve the garrison was too weak. He had many engagements, in all of which he was successful, but every engagement cost him some of his troops, and the men were becoming worn out with incessant fatigue under an Indian sun. The enemy fled from each field without any attempt to fight a real battle, but fled only to gather together again, swarming around in all directions. The Nana himself, with a great gathering, was again in the field, threatening Cawnpore, and Havelock was obliged to recross the Ganges, leaving the Lucknow garrison unrelieved, and to wait for reinforcements.

Sir James Outram arrived at Cawnpore on the 16th of September, with the 5th Fusiliers, her Majesty's 90th Regiment, and a battery of artillery, with which he placed himself under Havelock's command. On the 19th and

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20th Havelock's force, thus reinforced, again crossed the Ganges, and on the 25th relieved the Residency and its intrepid garrison. The relieving army was unable to carry out the original intention, which was, after leaving a body to strengthen the effective force of the garrison, to bring away the sick, the women and children, and retire with the remainder of the force to Cawnpore. Both the old garrison and the newly arrived force were in fact still surrounded and besieged, and became very urgent for reinforcements of men and provisions.

By this time help was arriving both from Calcutta and Delhi. From the latter, with scarcely a day's delay, a movable column was despatched, which passed down the Doab, dispersing the enemy wherever they ventured to make a stand, and relieving Agra, where the English rule was at once and effectually re-established. This column, first under Greathead, then under Grant, continued to force its way down, and on the 26th of October arrived at Cawnpore.

At Calcutta troops had been from time to time coming in. By the 8th of October there had arrived, the 23rd Fusiliers, 93rd Highlanders, three companies of the 82nd foot, two companies of Royal Artillery, and one company of Sappers, being the troops destined for China under Lord Elgin, which were intercepted on their way for the more urgent necessity of the Indian Government. A company of Royal Artillery, and 500 of the 13th Light Infantry, arrived from the Cape; and within the next three months, reinforcements to the number of 10,000 men landed at Calcutta, and by the following February 3000 more.

On the 27th of October, Sir Colin Campbell, the new

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Commander-in-Chief, left Calcutta; he arrived at Cawnpore on the 3rd of November with reinforcements of European troops, and proceeded to join General Grant's column from Delhi, which had previously, on the 30th of October, crossed the Ganges. The united force amounted to 3500 men, and with this Sir Colin Campbell, after some skirmishes and trifling engagements on the 13th and 15th of November, and some severe fighting on the 16th and 17th of November, succeeded in effecting a junction with Outram and Havelock. On the 22nd the old garrison of Lucknow executed its retreat from the Residency, covered by the relieving force, which itself fell back. The women and children, wounded, state prisoners, treasure, and guns were taken to the Commander-in-Chief's camp. With all the long convoy attendant upon the rescued garrison, Sir Colin returned to Cawnpore, leaving Sir James Outram with a strong division to hold the position of Alumbagh, near Lucknow, which, after all the heroism of Inglis and his garrison, and all the efforts of Havelock, Outram, and Colin Campbell, merely took the place of the Residency as the only spot which the English could call their own throughout the whole kingdom of Oude. The Commander-in-Chief was not an hour too soon in returning to Cawnpore, where a strong body of rebels had forced the British to retire into their entrenchments, and had burnt down their encampments. This disaster was, however, without difficulty retrieved by the prompt movements of Sir Colin Campbell.

Everybody breathed freer in India and in England when the news arrived, that the gallant garrison of Lucknow, and the women and children, were at length

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in safety, but except that Delhi, Agra, Cawnpore, and Allahabad were safe, little appeared to have been done towards subduing the rebellion, which was rife and paramount everywhere, and much encouraged by what the rebels considered a substantial triumph of their cause in the retirement of the British from Oude.

From every quarter news arrived almost every day of bodies of the mutineers and rebels being met and defeated; but in every quarter alike the dispersion seemed to be only for the day, and the same bodies or new bodies appeared to rise up in undiminished numbers, crossing from Oude into the Doab, from the Doab into Bundelcund and overrunning the surrounding districts.

The Commander-in-Chief, however, was steadily concentrating his troops for the final and decisive advance on Lucknow. On the 14th of February, 1858, he had for that purpose under his personal command 18,708 men; and he had directed other columns, amounting altogether to 12,000 men, to penetrate Oude above and below his own line of march, which was on the direct road from Cawnpore to Lucknow. One of these columns was under General Franks, who was operating in the neighbouring British province of Gorruckpore in conjunction with Jung Bahadoor of Nepaul, who had come to the assistance of the English with a considerable force of his own Goorka soldiers. The nature of the work to be done may be judged of by this, that Franks on his way towards Lucknow, having defeated large bodies of the enemy in two battles, had to fight a third against a force estimated at 25,000 men, including 5000 Sepoys and 1800

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cavalry with twenty-five guns. The enemy were reported in each of these actions as having been totally defeated and dispersed with great loss, and it is certain that in the last action twenty of the twenty-five guns were taken, with the camp and all the baggage and ammunition, while the loss on the British side did not exceed two killed and sixteen wounded.

Meanwhile the Commander-in-Chief crossed the Ganges and arrived within six miles of the Alumbagh on the 28th of February. He was here joined by General Franks on the 5th of March, and by Jung Bahadoor on the 11th, and the united forces under the Commander-in-Chief could not have amounted to much less than 50,000 men, the largest army which had ever been gathered under an English general in India, and he had with him a very powerful artillery. With this irresistible force he seems to have proceeded artistically, using his guns and gradually forcing the enemy from one line of defence after another.

The resistance was for the first days obstinate, but on and after the 15th of March the enemy's courage gave way, and the troops were seen streaming out of the city in vast numbers by a road to the north, which the English had neglected, or were unable, to close. On the 19th the Moosabagh, the last post held by the enemy, was taken, and the British authority was finally re-established over Lucknow. A strong moveable division being left in Lucknow to traverse and pacify Oude, the remainder of the Commander-in-Chief's army was left free to prosecute the same work of pacification in the Doab and the rest of the North-West Provinces.

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The success of the operations against Lucknow was so gratifying, that people did not stop to criticize. It is difficult, however, in reading the narrative, to avoid observing the contrast which is presented between the campaign of Sir Colin Campbell in Oude, and any other campaign of the British in India. No other general had ever thought it necessary to mass such an amount of force, or had deemed it expedient to proceed with such extreme deliberation and caution. It is not merely with Clive, with Lord Cornwallis, with Lord Lake that the comparison is forced upon us, but with what was done in this war itself by the assailants of Delhi, and by the columns whose exploits we shall have now to mention under Generals Rose, Roberts, and Whitlock.

By the middle of December, 1857, it was ascertained that Bombay was about to receive from England four regiments of infantry, three regiments of cavalry, and three batteries or companies of artillery, and that Madras was in like manner to receive five battalions of infantry, and four batteries or companies of artillery. It was therefore thought that without risking the safety or the peace of those Presidencies, movements might be made from them for the restoration of the British authority in Central India.

Accordingly from Bombay forces were organized, under Sir Hugh Rose and General Roberts respectively, which were known ultimately as the Central India Field Force, and the Rajhpootana Field Force. From the Madras Presidency an army or column was formed, under General Whitlock, called the Saugor and Nerbudda Field Force. To these forces was assigned the task of reducing and pacifying Central India; and that

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task was effectually performed by them, although their muster-rolls resembled the old modest scale on which Anglo-Indian armies had been ordinarily formed, rather than the comparatively colossal proportions to which the army under the Commander-in-Chief himself had grown.

General Roberts on the north marched from Ahmedabad through Deesa to Nusseerabad (taking the strong fort of Awa on his way), and thence proceeded to besiege, and after a short siege to take by assault, the strong place of Kotah, one of the great centres of the insurrection, garrisoned by 6000 men. In this place he took fifty guns and a large quantity of ammunition; and having restored British authority there, he proceeded to occupy and subdue Neemuch and Nusseerabad, important positions, the former of which especially had throughout furnished large contingents of men to the rebel armies. He was not only able to keep all that part of Rajhpootana quiet, but to detach, as we shall have subsequently to relate, nearly one half of his small force to the assistance of Sir Hugh Rose, in the more arduous labours which fell to the army under the latter.

Sir Hugh Rose, starting from Mhow, first secured Indore, the capital of Holkar's dominions, and then Bhopal; thence, after taking such forts as came in his way, he diverged to relieve Saugor. The distance from Indore to Saugor is 224 miles. He started from Indore on the 11th of January, and until within about thirty miles of Saugor, met with no opposition, and appears to have been most cordially and freely received and fully supplied as he went on. Here, on the 29th of January, he had to take by

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assault the fort of Ratgurh. The next day one of the most conspicuous of the rebel chieftains, the Rajah of Banpore, endeavoured to arrest his progress, but was defeated at the passage of the Bina, and Sir Hugh Rose, passing rapidly on, took the village of Barodia by storm. Other forts between this and Saugor were taken without further resistance, and Saugor was on the 2nd of February effectually relieved.

The position of Saugor at that time is thus described by Sir Robert Hamilton, the Governor-General's Political Agent for Central India:—

"The total absence of all ministerial government, beyond a circle of a couple of miles or less around the fort of Saugor, is the most extraordinary feature that attracts attention. Until the advance of the Central Indian Field Force, there was no police, no protective power, no authority in the hands of the civil officers, while there was an undisguised dread of the Sepoys of the two regiments, although the men who remained had not committed any overt act of mutiny, or evinced any spirit of opposition. It is very desirable that peace should be restored to the district, and its population made to feel that they are not exposed to the atrocities and plunder of the rebel Bundeelas or the mutinous Sepoys."

There is in this passage much that is instructive. The undisguised dread of Sepoys who had to all appearance remained faithful, was one of the necessities of the position, and yet there is no doubt that in many instances it caused the very evil that was dreaded. The Sepoys felt that they were suspected, and were alarmed lest their Sahib masters should punish them upon such suspicion; for it is not merely in the

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French revolution that men have been put to death for the crime of being "suspects." They were therefore, however reluctant at first, often by mere terror of the coming wrath which they apprehended, driven to join the insurgent bands as their best chance of safety. They were easily worked on by the emissaries who sedulously plied them. The "protective power" being gone, many chiefs, many landholders, who would otherwise have been peaceable subjects, thought it safer and better to join that which for the time seemed to be the stronger party.

The expression "rebel Bundeelas" is also very significant. Bundelcund, the inhabitants of which are called Bundeelas, is a territory about 200 miles long and 155 miles wide, a highland country, wild and roadless, with many fastnesses and forts belonging to Mahratta chiefs, and the population had so bad a reputation amongst their neighbours that the name Bundeela had become synonymous with robber. The strong arm of the British power had, since the subjugation of the Peshwa's country in 1819, repressed the marauding propensities of the Bundeela tribes, but there were of course many men alive in 1857 who could look back and did look back with regret to the olden time, and a great many others who saw in the removal of the controlling power an opportunity of recurring to the glorious licence of freebooting which they had heard of from their fathers.

Bundelcund being still in this disturbed state, and the soldiers and many of the people of Gwalior on one side, and of Rewah on the other, openly making common cause with the revolted chiefs of that country and with the mutineers and rebels from Oude and the Doab,

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Tantia Topee, the commander of the "armies of the Peshwa," as the latter were now called, thought and boasted, that although the English might hold the coasts of the east and the west, he was and would be master of Central India, the heart of Hindostan.

Sir Hugh Rose, having placed Saugor so far in security that the garrison could well wait the promised arrival of Whitlock, returned to his own more immediate task. On the 1st of March he cleared Barodia, which had again become infested, and forced the difficult and important pass of Muddunpore, and proceeded towards Jhansi. On the 20th of March he reported officially to the Governor-General that "the 2nd brigade is to-day within ten miles of Jhansi; the cavalry, under Brigadier Stewart, will have invested the fort and town before sunset; and Major Boileau will have made a reconnoissance with a view to fix the site of our batteries on the arrival of the remainder of the brigade before Jhansi early to-morrow morning." The 1st brigade had been detained at a place called Chandhairee, five long marches off.

Jhansi had a garrison of 1500 mutineers; and there were in and around the place and in its neighbourhood large numbers of Bundeelas, not less than 10,000, according to Sir Robert Hamilton's estimate. On the 24th of March some mortars opened against the town; on the 25th some large siege guns and mortars against the fort; and on the 29th a third battery of guns and mortars began to play.

In this state of things Tantia Topee put himself in motion, accompanied by the Rajah of Banpore, the Rajah of Shahghur, and other leading rebels. To relieve Jhansi and defeat Rose every effort was of

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course made; and the rebels were able to get together for this purpose a force of 32 guns, and 22,000 mutineers and Bundeelas, including a large body of cavalry. This was, doubtless, a very considerable force, but its numbers and composition, as compared with those of the great native armies which had been in former campaigns scattered by small bodies of the British, further illustrate the essential weakness of the rebellion, and its utter inability to cope with the power which the British had by this time assembled in India, especially when it is considered that everything for the rebels depended on the success or failure of this movement.

On the evening of the 31st the enemy crossed the river Betwa, and on the 1st of April marched to attack Sir Hugh Rose, whose army had by this time been reinforced by the arrival of his 1st brigade. Without allowing the siege to be for an instant suspended, Rose received the attack with that portion of his 2nd brigade which was not occupied with the siege operations; and the enemy were soon driven from their first position, then from a second, and then compelled to retreat across the Betwa to a third, from which they were also expelled. In the meantime, part of the 1st brigade fell in with a large body of the enemy, which had separated from the main army, and defeated them with great loss. The defeat of the enemy was complete; but, as usual, they acted on the prudent maxim of fighting and running away, and fled in two large bodies, one making for the strong place of Calpee, on the Jumna, which was held by a body of mutineers, and one for a place called Mow, near Allypore, in the Bundelcund country.

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After the failure of this attempt to relieve Jhansi, the siege was prosecuted with vigour. On the 3rd of April, one day's rest having been allowed to the troops, the town was assaulted. It was not, however, until the 4th, and after heavy street firing, that the whole town was taken—the rebel garrison retreating to the fort. On the night of the 4th the Ranee, with her chief men and a large party of her troops, succeeded in escaping from the fort, which was without further resistance taken possession of on the 5th.

The entire loss of the British in all these operations from the 1st up to the evening of the 5th was 343 killed and wounded, including 36 officers, while it is stated that "the enemy's loss must have been about 5000 killed."

It was thought prudent to remain at Jhansi until the 25th of April, when it was ascertained that General Roberts's operations had been successful in the direction of Kotah and Neemuch, and that he was enabled to despatch part of his force into the intermediate country, so as to protect the flank of Rose's advancing army on that side.

On the 23rd of April, General Roberts accordingly despatched a column of his troops to co-operate with Rose; and thus assured on that side, Rose lost no time in advancing on Calpee, which had become the rallying-point to which the rebels were from all sides collecting.

At a place called Koonch, about midway between Jhansi and Calpee, the rebels assembled in great force to dispute the advance. All their principal chiefs were there:—the Ranee of Jhansi, Tantia Topee, the Shahghur and Banpore Rajahs, and about twenty more of

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sufficient note to be mentioned by name in the "intelligence" of the spies. Here they strongly entrenched themselves; but Sir Hugh Rose, having made a disposition to attack them in reverse (a simple military movement, for which it would seem they were wholly unprepared), the result was that "the town of Koonch was soon in our possession, the rebels retiring in good order, pursued by horse artillery and cavalry. The mutineer Sepoys fought with determined obstinacy. They were, however, completely routed, losing 9 guns, and about 500 killed; the English casualties were heavy, but chiefly from the effects of the sun." This was on the 6th of May; and by the 15th, Sir Hugh Rose had arrived before Calpee, which was now the best fortified stronghold of the rebels in Central and Western India, and the only arsenal, full of warlike stores and ammunition.

The enemy was unusually strong, under three leaders of considerable influence—Rao Sahib, a nephew of Nana, the Nawab of Banda, and the Ranee of Jhansi. The high descent of the Ranee, her unbounded liberality to her troops and retainers, and her fortitude, which no reverses could shake, rendered her an influential and dangerous adversary. "The rebel army was composed of the Gwalior contingent—the finest men, the best drilled and organized native troops of all arms in India—other mutinous Bengal infantry regiments, rebel cavalry from Kotah, and the whole reinforced by the force of all arms of the Nawab of Banda, comprising a great deal of mutinous Bengal cavalry. All the Sepoy regiments kept up carefully their English equipment and organization, the word of command even being given in English."

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Notwithstanding that Sir Hugh Rose's forces were exhausted by their incessant labours, many being actually prostrated by sunstroke, he lost no time in undertaking the siege of Calpee, in which he was now able to obtain the co-operation of a column from the Doab under Colonel Maxwell, consisting of about 2000 men with 400 horses and eight guns and mortars, including one royal regiment. On the 23rd, the enemy again attempted a general engagement, and were defeated with great loss. This, which was called the battle of Goolaoolee, was the severest and most hotly contested battle which Sir Hugh Rose had to fight. Indeed at one time matters seemed almost desperate. The right was driven in, and the enemy, intoxicated with opium, rushed in overpowering numbers on the mortar battery. Every horse of the mounted officers had been killed or wounded by the shot of the rebels coming over the brow of the hill; the British infantry, prostrated by the sun, and with their Enfield rifles choked and inefficient, were driven completely in. Brigadier Stuart, on foot with his sword drawn, had ordered the twelve artillerymen (all that remained to the half battery of artillery), to draw their swords and fight to the last for their guns. The enemy, debouching in thousands from the ravines, were rushing with frantic cries against this handful of men, and were only thirty yards off, when Rose came up with Maxwell's Camel corps, which with three cheers charged. The enemy wavered, turned and fled, first into the ravines and then into Calpee. In the meantime, the 21st Company of Royal Engineers, the 25th Native Infantry, and the whole of Rose's left, charged the enemy's centre and right,

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which were completely broken. The success was complete, and the victory led to the immediate abandonment of Calpee, which was taken possession of by the British next day.

Pursued by horse artillery and cavalry, the enemy lost their formation, and were dispersed all over the country. Many were killed, and the guns, stores, baggage, tents, &c., all fell into the hands of the British, so that even the Ranee of Jhansi, having no tent, was obliged to sleep under the shelter of some trees. At Calpee they found the arsenal full of warlike stores and arms, shot and shell, and all the requisites of a park of artillery, besides all the ordnance mounted in the fort.

The victory, however, was not so decisive as it seemed. It was thought that Sir Hugh Rose's work was done. He resigned his command in that belief, after writing that "the Sepoys were completely down and dismayed, that they were fleeing in the utmost disorder across the country in twos and threes, without guns or tents, throwing away their arms and accoutrements, and even their clothes, to enable them to run faster."

Suddenly there came news which created a sensation throughout India only equalled by that which was caused by the first mutiny. The rebels had rallied, and were once more an army 10,000 or 11,000 strong, under the same leaders, the Ranee of Jhansi, the Nawab of Banda, Rao Sahib, and Tantia Topee. On the 1st of June they attacked Scindiah, the Maharajah of Gwalior, whose troops went over to the enemy, he himself being driven to escape as a fugitive to Agra. They possessed themselves of his capital,

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his fort, one of the strongest in India, his treasury and jewels, and were set up with abundance of money, a capital park of artillery, plenty of material, and were reinforced by the whole of Scindiah's army.

Sir Hugh Rose immediately resumed his command, and proceeded by forced marches from Calpee to Gwalior. General Smith, on his side, with his brigade of the Rajhpootana Field Force, in like manner moved from Chandhairee, and, on the 17th of June, arrived at a place called Kotah-ki-serai, within about ten miles of Gwalior. Sir Hugh Rose, on the 16th of June, arrived at Bahadurpoor, a few miles from Morar, where were the cantonments of the Gwalior garrison, which were then occupied in great force by the enemy. His troops had had a long and fatiguing march, and the sun had been up for some time, but nevertheless he determined to make an immediate attack; and after two hours' fighting the cantonments were stormed, the rebels retreating in great haste into Gwalior.

On the 18th he was joined by part of his troops which had come up from Calpee, and immediately marched to Kotah-ki-serai, and effected his junction with the Rajhpootana column. The march was so harassing, that 100 men of the 86th Regiment alone were compelled by sun sickness to fall out. These same men the next day fell in and took part in the assault, corroborating a previous report of the General's, "that the spirit of the soldiers often made them fight, when they were too weak to march."

Having effected his junction, Rose made, on the 19th of June, all his arrangements for storming Gwalior on the next day, but an offensive movement of the

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enemy determined him to convert his own defence into an attack without farther delay, and by the close of the 19th not only were all the positions of the enemy outside the city stormed, but the city itself was taken possession of.

On the next morning two young lieutenants and a small party of the 25th Bombay Native Infantry burst open the main gateway of the fort, surprised the other gates, and after a desperate hand-to-hand combat in a narrow street, took the fort, every man in it being killed, but the young English leader, Lieutenant Rose, fell mortally wounded.

In the course of the operations before Gwalior, in a brilliant charge of the 8th Hussars (part of General Smith's brigade), the Ranee of Jhansi fell, who, "although a lady, was the bravest and best military leader of the rebels." She had the most cause for her bitter hostility to the British Government.

Tantia Topee abandoned the defence of Gwalior, while his troops were still fighting, and fled with a considerable body of infantry and cavalry. Sir Hugh Rose wrote of him, "His character is a singular anomaly. He gives proof of great moral courage in undertaking the execution of the daring and important plans which he forms, but his nerve fails him in the combat which is to decide their success. Thus he planned the successful conspiracy to overthrow Scindiah's power. But at Gwalior, as at Koonch and the Betwa, his flight was too early to be excusable, and too precipitate to be dignified."

The enemy were actively pursued and totally dispersed, and on the next morning the Maharajah of Gwalior returned to his capital, escorted by British

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soldiers to his palace, through crowds of inhabitants, who greeted him with enthusiastic acclamations.

Sir Hugh Rose's summary of this last act is this :— "Although a most arduous campaign had impaired the health and strength of every man of my force, their discipline, devotion, and courage remained unvarying and unshaken, enabling them to make a very rapid march in summer heat to Gwalior, fight and gain two actions on the road, one at the Morar Cantonment, the other at Kotah-ki-serai, arrive at their posts from great distances and by bad roads before Gwalior before the day appointed, the 19th of June, and on that same day carry by assault all the enemy's positions on strong heights and on most difficult ground, taking one battery after another, twenty-seven pieces of artillery in the action, twenty-five in the pursuit, besides the guns in the fort, the old city, the new city, and finally the rock of Gwalior, held to be one of the most important and strongest fortresses in India. I marched on the 6th of June from Calpee to Gwalior, and on the 19th of the same month the Gwalior States were restored to their Prince."

There is in this the ring of the old metal. This does sound of the spirit of a Lake or of a Napier, and shows that pluck and discipline can still do against masses and against fortresses, what they did in the olden time, if a general will only trust to them.

The third column which we have mentioned, General Whitlock's, had a less eventful but more profitable campaign. With his small army he left Kamptee on the 23rd of January, 1858, and made rapid marches through the Saugor and Nerbudda territory and Bundelcund, restoring the British authority as he went,

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and securing the important places with small garrisons. 50 Europeans and 265 natives (Madrassees) for Jubbulpore, and 17 Europeans and 40 natives for Dumoh, were thought sufficient, and proved sufficient, to place those important places in security and to leave him free to march. They continued to march through the very heart of the difficult Bundelcund country, but were unopposed, and were with the exception of one small skirmish unable to bring the enemy to fight, until they arrived near Banda on the 18th of April. On the 19th of April the Nawab of Banda, often mentioned in this narrative as one of the principal rebel chiefs, at last resolved to make a stand in a strong position on the left bank of the river Kane, where the Nawab had under his command 6000 men, with 3000 in reserve, principally composed of mutineers of the three armies, the infantry with percussion muskets. Notwithstanding the strength of this army, and although Whitlock's troops of all arms did not amount to 1900 men, the latter succeeded in inflicting a complete defeat on their adversary with a loss to themselves absolutely nominal. The Nawab fled with the greater part of his army, leaving, however, nearly 1000 on the field and abandoning his capital and his palace, with thirteen large brass guns, several smaller ones, and much valuable property. So sudden was the panic that the British in occupying the palace found food preparing for the fugitive leader.

After this signal success Whitlock halted at Banda for the arrival of his 2nd brigade, intending, thus reinforced, to proceed to the aid of Rose, but the despatches from the latter, announcing his brilliant victories, relieved him from all necessity to quit his

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own task of pacifying Bundelcund. After some delay at Banda he turned to a place called Kirwee or Tirhaon, the palace of one of the rebel rajahs, which he entered without resistance on the 6th of June—a place since celebrated for the immense booty, estimated at 700,000*l.*, which became afterwards the subject of a monster prize cause between the lucky captors and the troops of Rose and Roberts, who endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to maintain that the valuable prize was in truth the spoil of the united labours of the three armies. The proverbial fortune of war and uncertainty of law gave the hard knocks to the one and the spoil to the other.

With the restoration of the Maharajah Scindiah the mutiny war may be considered as terminated. Of course there were disturbed places to be reduced to order; there were rebel bands and predatory bands to be extirpated or dispersed; but there was no army in the field to be beaten, and no fortress or arsenal of any importance to be wrested from the rebels. The only work for the British army was that of assisting the magistrates and the police; and it is painful to read in the despatches and diaries of the time the constant references to the hangman's work, that was everywhere going on.

No doubt severe measures were thought to be well justified by the atrocities which had been committed, and by the treachery of which the Sepoys had been guilty. Every Sepoy felt that in mutinying, and especially in adding to the mutiny the treacherous murder of his officers, he had put himself out of the pale of mercy; and the leaders were aware that they had been guilty of high treason, and, in many cases,

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had directed or sanctioned the slaughter of helpless men, women, and children, so that the forfeit of their lives would almost certainly be exacted.

The vindictive feelings of the English had on their side been roused in truth to a degree of fury which it was difficult to moderate. The "mild Sepoy" had shown himself a treacherous and bloodthirsty wolf; and the general feeling was that the whole race was a race of wolves, and that any number of black lives would be but an inadequate sacrifice to the manes of the English who had been so foully murdered. The unappeasable cry for blood was thought to be the natural expression of a manly indignation at the atrocities which had been committed by the mutineers and rebels. Lord Canning was nicknamed "Clemency Canning," because he thought that it was not sufficient that some black men had foully and cruelly taken away many white men's lives, and some fiends, Mohammedan or Brahmin, had been guilty of brutal and treacherous massacres, to make it right that every black man, every Mohammedan, every Brahmin, should be a fit subject for the indiscriminate vengeance of the English in their turn.

It is much to be feared that the English did in fact, in too many instances, exact a cruel and indiscriminate revenge; at all events, it cannot but be noted that in this war there is no record of quarter given or prisoners taken. Such a war, begun under such circumstances, unavoidably rouses the worst passions, and is always but too likely to become an interminable war of extermination, like that between the white and red men in America, or between the English settlers and the natives in New Zealand.

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It is not impossible, that in the commencement of the mutiny some of the leaders and instigators had, in truth, conceived and acted upon the diabolical policy of making the Sepoys murder their officers, of making the chiefs and others embrue their hands in the blood of English women and children, in order that there should be no repentance and no retreat. It was indeed an effectual burning of their ships behind them. There is no doubt that the obstinate vitality of the rebellion, after the failure of the attempt to establish a native monarchy at Delhi or Lucknow, was principally due to the conviction that there was no hope of forgiveness, and that there was nothing to be gained by submission. On the one side were the avenging ministers of an outraged government, on the other, troops of outlawed banditti; such contests are always long.

It may well be doubted whether it is ever right or expedient to resort to a wholesale system of execution. When that is done, it is obvious that punishment is resorted to, not for the purpose of deterring for the future, but for the gratification of the vindictive feelings which have been excited. Where the offence has assumed a political character, where there has been an universal mutiny, accompanied by a widespread revolt, where the outbreak has assumed the proportions of a war, it is the prudent as well as the humane course to be content with the slaughter of the battle-field as a sufficient expiation of the offence, deep as it may have been, and to reserve the hangman for a few—a very few—special cases of more than common atrocity. Persons who have been thoroughly frightened are generally cruel. The paroxysm of terror is followed by a paroxysm of cruelty;

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and it is easy under such circumstances to believe that outraged humanity calls for victims, that the blood which has polluted the majesty of government and the law can only be cleansed by the blood of the offenders, and that the prestige of the power which has been defied can only be restored by terrible examples of punishment.

However, by degrees, the counsels of clemency began to prevail, and Lord Canning did much for humanity and much for the honour of Englishmen in withstanding the angry cries for more vengeance and more blood which arose everywhere around him. The nick-name of Clemency Canning, given him in derision, is the strongest proof of the debt of gratitude we owe him, for having saved us from the indelible stigma which would have attached to our name if he had listened to those cries.

The defeat of the rebel armies was, however, followed by a wise policy of disarmament throughout the whole of the disturbed provinces. In Oude, especially, every fortress was destroyed or dismantled, and all the guns and weapons were seized, or only escaped seizure by being buried in the ground concealed from search, and rendered by that concealment itself harmless. The Talookdars were without exception reduced from the position of turbulent chiefs, holding with armed bodies of retainers strong places in difficult fastnesses, to the position of lords, residing amongst a tenantry of cultivators, in peaceful manor-houses accessible at any moment to the magistrate and police.

Lord Canning had during the struggle in Oude issued a proclamation, which became famous over the

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world, from its having been the subject of fierce political discussion in the English Parliament and a party conflict. In the proclamation all the Talookdaries, or estates of all the insurgent Talookdars, were declared absolutely forfeited and confiscated to the State—a proclamation in its terms very startling, but as explained and as acted on by Lord Canning, its nature and effect were very different from what at first appeared. His policy was to make a *tabula rasa* of all existing rights, and to compel every Talookdar to accept from the British Government itself a new grant of his estate on the usual terms of fealty, rent service, and other services to that Government as the Lord Paramount of the soil. In fact the Talookdars did accept such grants, and accept them most thankfully, if any credit can be given to the very warm expressions of gratitude contained in a loyal address to Lord Canning, signed by the whole of the principal Talookdars of Oude, and presented to him by a distinguished deputation from their body.

Order was not fully restored everywhere until the end of 1859, by which time every place was restored to the nominal guardianship of the police; but the British power was re-established as the sovereign power with the taking of Gwalior, and as regarded the population of the country peace was substantially re-established at the same time, that is to say, within little more than one year after the first outbreak of the mutiny. The best evidence of this is to be found in the official report on the North-West Provinces, wherein it is stated, that the total demand of land revenue for the year, 30th April, 1859, to 30th April, 1860, was realized, except 2¼ per cent., whereas in the

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preceding year, 1858 to 1859, the deficit amounted to nearly 6½ per cent. on the demand.

It is very curious and noteworthy that, as was ascertained by the careful inquiries of the commissioners as to the sanitary state of the British army in India, only 586 British soldiers were actually killed in battle, or died obviously of wounds received during the whole of the operations of the Mutiny War.

The expenditure was wholly charged to, and borne with little difficulty by, the Indian exchequer. Including all the charges of the war, and all the losses occasioned by plunder and by the disturbance in the ordinary receipts of revenue, there was a deficit in the year ending April 30th, 1858, of something more than eight millions, and in the next year of about fourteen millions, which had to be provided for by loans. There was a further deficit of nearly eleven millions in the following year, which may be charged to the mutiny, making an aggregate of thirty-three millions. The interest upon this additional debt is the permanent charge upon the people of India as the result of the outbreak. This, however, does not represent the whole of the burthen which it has imposed on them. It has since been considered necessary to maintain an enormous British army in India, by way of safeguard against any possible repetition of the rebellion, and this has occasioned an immense increase in the military expenditure to be provided for by the people of India; but with all this, it is impossible not to feel surprise at the singular smallness of the injury which the vessel of the State sustained from the buffeting of such a storm.

In looking back at all the circumstances of the re-

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bellion and its suppression, it is satisfactory to find that what took place was not the normal result of the permanent relations which had existed, and which must continue to exist, between the British as alien and Christian rulers and their Hindoo and Mohammedan subjects. There was a combination of circumstances which, it is not too much to say, can by no possibility, in the ordinary course of human affairs, occur again. It is not probable that there should ever be a native army again with the pretensions or with the injuries, real or fancied, of the Bengal Sepoys; that there should be at the same time a whole nation of Talookdars, with armed retainers, smarting under the wrongs of a new and, to them, oppressive rule; that there should be a Mohammedan dynasty to serve as a rallying-point in the old Mogul capital; that there should be the heir of the Peshwa, and the guardian of the young prince of Jhansi, and the sovereigns and princes of Oude, at one and the same time inspired by the bitterest hatred of the British; or that there should ever be any similar coincidence of like causes, or of any causes, tending to produce a revolt against so powerful a rule as that of the British. The fact that the revolt was made and failed, and that the mutineers and rebels were so signally crushed, is itself calculated, until the lesson is forgotten, to prevent a renewal of the attempt.

It is not to be forgotten that the mutineers had provocation, temptation, and opportunity without example. It was not in human nature for men with arms in their hands to submit quietly to be squeezed out of their perquisites and privileges, and certainly not in Hindoo or at all events in Brahmin nature, to allow themselves to be without resistance deprived by

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fraud or force of their religion and their caste, as they believed to be the fate destined for them by the Government. It was very natural, too, that they should believe this, and that they should be carried away by a fury of passion, when they saw regiments cashiered and their comrades under a fearful sentence, for a refusal to touch the pollution of the ill-starred cartridges. The temptation was sedulously administered by the ever watchful, ever busy, emissaries of the discontented princes and chiefs, and by the voluntary missionaries of Hindoo and Mohammedan fanaticism. The opportunity was afforded by the unusual paucity of European troops, and by the blind confidence which had placed artillery, forts, arsenals, magazines, and the public treasuries almost in the sole care of the native soldiers, who had been carefully disciplined and trained in the use of every arm in the service. With all this provocation, opportunity, and temptation, it is reasonably certain that a very little change in the actual conditions would have either wholly prevented the mutiny and rebellion, or prevented them assuming the formidable proportions they did.

Had the railroads now existing then existed, the mutiny would never have had a day's chance of success. Had there been at Meerut a man with energy enough to have sent on half his force in pursuit of the mutinous Sepoys, the arsenal of Delhi would have been saved, and the population there cowed, as the population of Benares was by the small force under Neill. If there had been 20,000 Poorbea Sepoys less, and if there had been even 5000 British soldiers and 5000 Sikhs, Punjaubees, Goorkas, or low-caste Madrassees, in the important positions, the Sepoys would

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have been crushed. If, for example, there had been at Delhi 500 Europeans and 500 Goorkas or Sikhs, a like garrison as addition to the troops at Lucknow, a like at Agra, a like at Saugor, and a force of 3000 or 4000 Europeans and as many natives (not Sepoys) in the central position of Allahabad, it is quite certain that the rising would never have taken place, or at least would not have had the temporary success which caused the flame to burn so fiercely and so widely. Many native regiments would never have joined the mutiny. As it was, many wavered and hesitated for a time, and with the presence of such forces at such places at the critical moment, these and probably others would have remained true to their salt. Mutiny is like a contagious disease; if you check it anywhere you check its spread, but each place where it prevails becomes a fresh centre of infection.

It is, moreover, obvious that the Mutiny ought not to have lasted so long as it did after the Commander-in-Chief and the reinforcements had arrived. The Commander-in-Chief's prudence and caution were carried to the very verge of timidity. If there had been a Lake, or a Napier, or a Rose, at Allahabad, the first move upon Lucknow would have been made much sooner, and there would have been no retreat for the purpose of massing the great force for the second move upon, and the final capture of, that place. It was not by such cautious tactics that the Anglo-Indian empire was won. No doubt the display of overwhelming force at each point assailed saved life at that point; but it is the business of soldiers to risk their lives on the battle-field or in the assault, and the prolongation of a campaign for a single month under an Indian sun

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gives probably many more victims to disease than the British lost in any fight or storm. It does seem at all events inexplicable, that, with the large army set comparatively free after the fall of Lucknow, the Commander-in-Chief should not have been able to detach a column to take and hold Calpee close at hand, instead of leaving that task and that additional glory to the gallant little army, which had forced and fought its way from the remote frontier of the Bombay Presidency. Sir Colin Campbell seems always to have thought that he was dealing with a real army under real generals, and, to use an expression found in one of the despatches of his own chief of the staff, he was always giving himself a stiff neck looking over his shoulder to see that his communications were not cut off.

If there had been real armies on the rebel side, the rapidity of their movements, and the reappearance of the same bodies, apparently under the same leaders, at places a great distance apart, would call for our profoundest admiration for the skill of the generals, and the aptitude of troops which could be so moved, and could be subsisted while so moved; but in truth they were not real armies. They were large masses gathered under a banner, easily beaten, easily dispersed, scattered in twos and threes and gathered as easily together again, partly the same, partly other individuals, like a large mob beaten by a few police out of one street and assembling in another. This consideration, no doubt, detracts much from the brilliancy of the achievements we are wont so much to admire in the gallant heroes of the mutiny; but it is well calculated to assure us of the ease with which the permanence of our power may be

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maintained against military mutiny, caste, or deep rebellion, or even a combined revolt of dependent princes.

On the other hand it may possibly happen that the leading men of India, educated at the colleges founded by us, trained to the exercise of authority in the county and corporate bodies and judicial tribunals created by us, will some day be ambitious enough and powerful enough to wrest from the small body of alien governors the supreme central authority. We must content ourselves with the belief that such a day is, at all events, far distant. A man with a ninety-nine years' lease does not grieve for the certain termination of his interest. Our lease will not be perpetual, but it will be long; and when there are a sufficient number of leading men, so educated and so trained, and united enough to form a Native Government which will preserve to the people the peace, the laws, the administration of justice, the institutions and the liberties, which they enjoy under our sway, we may well be content to leave to themselves a people, whose happiness we have thought it our sole duty to promote, from whom we have exacted no tribute and sought no advantage, except that interchange of mutual benefits which flow from an unrestricted commerce. We shall, meanwhile, do our duty by them as honest men. If, so doing, we lose them because they are fit to take their own independent place as the greatest empire in the world, we shall lose them—if loss it can be called—without a blush and without a sigh.

THE END.

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